

8클래스 1

마법사의 회귀



Revolution of the 8th Class Mage

– 8클래스 마법사의 회귀 –

- Part 1 -

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- STORY -

Humanity's first 8th Class Mage.

Betrayed, he traveled back 30 years into the past.

The story follows Ian Page, archmage and the first man to break through the 6th class, then through the 7th and become the most powerful mage, an 8th class mage.

After a lifetime of war and killing, the continent was finally unified thanks to his efforts. Now, old, his wish is to live the rest of his life in peace and try to find salvation for all the blood he spilled. However, his old friend, maddened by paranoia, couldn't tolerate someone so powerful, so he betrayed Ian and killed him.

In his last breath, he casted a time magic that allowed him to travel back to when he was a young boy. With all the knowledge he previously had, he decided to do things better so he could end with less regrets.

CHAPTER 1

I'VE BEEN BETRAYED

"A poison that neutralised the Mana in the blood vessel," recited the blonde, middle age Emperor 'Ragnar Greenriver.' He was the history's first Emperor to have united the Continent under his rule.

"The poison's effect last for several minutes at most. For you that is."

He was close friend with Humanity's first 8th Class Magician, 'Ian Page.' Together, the two childhood friend's mark on the world created numerous songs, planted countless poems, and written scores of epics.

Though it was still true, till, at least today.

"Still, if I try bland some other poison..."

"Uh, for what reason...?"

The 8th Class Magician, Ian, who had returned to his hometown to spend his remaining life in quiet solitude, spoke as he swallowed the thick blood in his mouth.

"Do you not know already?"

The Emperor's voice was surprisingly unconcerned. Even though he had fed a deadly poison to his friend of several decades.

"Your strength, that power has been no help for the days after the Unification. In war time it may have been different, but right now, it is something that causes unease. Those words you spoke back then."

Doubtless, it was all true.

The unfathomable power that could easily wipe out a minor nation single-handedly. That was the power of the 8th Circle Magician.

“As long as Ian Page lives as an ally to the Empire, that fact alone is enough to light the fire of rebellion. Therefore, I shall go back to my hometown and live the rest of my life in penitence. I am sure you said it in such lines.”

Fear entered the Emperor’s eyes.

Of all things, why fear? The one who had ingested poison was Ian.

“Do you know, Ian? I do not fear a rebellion. No matter what, rebellions are a work of man. This is within the scope of man’s understanding.”

“...”

“But you, what about the power you possess? Is this the work of man? Do you surely see this power as something beyond the ken of man?”

Ian dearly wanted to respond.

This power was what made you Emperor.

That this very power shaped the Unification of the whole Continent.

The power that was maintaining the very peace right now.

“Cough!”

Ian could not project his voice any longer.

The very counterflow to his blood was difficult to cope with.

“I am afraid. Afraid of Ian Page. Afraid of the 8th Class Magician. My old friend... Damn it! Yes, I am maddened by fear of my old friend! Me, my kingdom, you are a savage monster that can take it all from me! How so can I let such monster live?”

The Emperor, exposing his bout of madness to the world, stopped his soliloquy and looked toward his dying friend, Ian Page. Sorrowful but satisfied, the Emperor’s expression was difficult to read.

“By all means, do not... do not forgive my actions.”

That was the end of the Emperor’s words. As he left the cottage, a fire erupted all around. Did he think that the poison was not enough?

‘Bastard.’

Ian, meandered in his thoughts.

The Emperor. His old friend Ragnar Greenriver’s transformation. His decision to leave for the countryside. He thought if he was out of sight, the situation would have become better.

‘It seems I was too complacent.’

Ian could have never imagined it would have come to this. He could have never imagined the depth of madness the Emperor fell into.

‘But.’

From his bosom, Ian took out an object. At first glance, it looked like an ornate dirk. Decorated from the tip of the blade to the handle with jewels and engravings. Rather than a bladed tool, it looked more like a decorative piece.

Surururung...

Even then, the sound of it’s unsheathing said otherwise. Just the sound told of it’s sharpness.

‘It seems like I wasn’t the only one complacent, Ragnar.’

Engraved letters covered the blade of the dirk completely. So small were the letters, that it could not be read by the naked eye.

‘This is the repentance I have desired. ’

The blood on his hands, he wanted to wash off what little he could wash off with this.

‘For the numerous that dies with my magic, for them, I would lead my life in

repentance.'

All of it was true. Only the method was different.

Surpassing Humanity's first 6th Class, 7th Class and even reaching the 8th Class, the unprecedented Arch Mage Ian. Wasting away the years praying was something that could not fill Ian's bowl.

'Setting back everything as it once was.'

The moment he decided to leave for the countryside, Ian had decided to research 'Time Magic' with all his might. If it was possible to turn back time, it was possible to reset everything.

'And make better choices.'

Of course, it was not easy. Rather, it was close to impossible. There were only unproven, unfinished theories.

'This will possibly be the very first test.'

The time to agonise perfection and improvement had long passed. Even if there were an adverse reaction, what more than death awaited? No, in the end, he had to die.

'To save what little Mana I have, there is no other way.'

There was only one place that the poison had yet to affect him. The place that regulated all Mana within the body, the small core within his heart.

'Mana Heart.'

Puuuuk!

At that very place, he pierces the formulaic dirk, to drain all possible power source that was called Mana.

UuuuuWung!

Before long, a brilliant blue light engulf Ian.

(Ra... Husu..... Ekiro.....)

Simultaneously, Ian had started his chant. One by one, words were spurted out painfully. By no means did this sound come through his voice. Nor was this a common chant.

(Ro... Kuberugato.....)

The Dragon that was commonly known as the 'Initiator of Magic.' They had created the ancient language, 'Dragon Chant.'

(Zen... Shenigas...!)

In the heart of the mountain, when the echoes of the reverberating Dragon Chant was about to come to a close. The dirk crumbled into dust and scattered. The intense blue light gradually hid the trace of the last vestige. Of the Great Arch Mage Ian Page.

CHAPTER 2

30 YEARS BACK TO THE PAST

“Uuuurrg...!”

As Ian was regaining conscience, the very first thing he felt was nausea. The nausea was so bad, he felt like vomiting.

‘What happened?’

Hurriedly, he searched his chest. Blood, wounds, pain, he did not feel any of it. He was certain something unusual happened.

“Ian, what is wrong with you?”

Ian’s heart skipped a beat. Even the nausea disappeared for the moment. Such unforgettable, familiar voice. That memorable, that voice he missed terrible, tickled his left ear.

“Mo, mother...?”

His mother that departed long ago. The voice of ‘Vanessa Page.’ Never could I have known that a day would come that I would meet her again.

‘Did I succeed?’

Or did I fell into world of the dead? Claspig his mother’s hand tightly, Ian looked around.

“Next!”

“Je, Jess from Lloyd Village!”

“Lloyd? There is a village named Lloyd?”

“The village is very far apart and rural...”

“Hmp! No matter, go in.”

“A, a, a is there really, a true Mage inside?”

“Well, you will know if you go in, ain’t it?”

“Ah. Yes!”

A row thousands of children seem to have lined up for this. Mixed in this line was Ian and Vanessa. Controlling the surging crowds were the rough, ugly looking soldiers from the lord’s castle. A flag with an Ivory Tower symbol fluttered atop the pure white tent.

Drinking in the the scenery, Ian could judge his current situation.

‘I seem to have... succeeded.’

His small-er hands was further proof of his success.

He had travelled exactly 30 years back. Back before the Continent was Unified under Greenriver’s name. He could guess the exact number of years because of the current situation. All the children were lined up to be ‘examined,’ every feudal estate was enforced to do the ‘Mana Reaction Test.’

‘It was mandatory test for every child who turned 10 years old.’

Before coming back, Ian was forty years old. By the consequence of logical deduction, he had travelled back 30 years into the past.

‘I have come back further than I thought possible.’

Not 10, not 20, but 30 years. Of course, this was not bad result. No, it was rather fantastic.

‘I only tried to erase the blood on my hand.’

The reason he had delved into Dragon Chant to research Time Magic, was to erase any

evidence of the destruction he wrought with his magic. To pull out the root and branch of history, and change it completely. Such was his vindication before he was poisoned by the Emperor.

‘Well, I simply can’t let it end again with a knife in my back.’

By the pretext of being friend, he had made many concessions. By the virtue of being loyal, he had been more than tolerant. This had lead to the unlimited misery. His best of friend, Emperor Ragnar, turning traitor. Being used of his life, in the end, all it lead to was his death.

‘This life I have been given, I shall not be lead by anyone.’

For such conviction to be proven true, he had to find it again. The Power of the 8th Class Mage, and advance above that power. Why not? For he had already walked that path once. He would run toward it in a breath of a moment and aim much further forward.

“Next!”

As Ian came to the resolution of the heart, it was his turn for the Mana Reaction Test.

“I will be back.”

Ian tried to comfort his mother, whose face was full of worry.

Walking forward to the soldier in front of the tent, he spoke, “Ian, from Mogrian Village. ”

“Mogrian... Ah, are you the son of our Vanessa?”

Ian’s mother was the kitchen maid in the lord’s castle. For a kitchen maid, she was beautiful to a fault that many soldiers fawn over her. They saw her as an easy target, as she was a widow and a kitchen maid.

“Go ahead and don’t bother the Mage with useless questions.”

The soldier’s eye was clammy as he had his sight focused on Ian’s mother. Something Ian could have never noticed in his youthful ignorance.

'I should probably fix his eyes very soon.'

Vowing, Ian entered the tent. In the tent was a young delegate Mage and three Knights, who stood guard.

"Sir Aaron, how many children are left?"

"I believe you still have to spend several hours."

"Huh....."

Was it because the Mage had already tested several hundred children? The Mage's voice was full of tiredness.

'I this brings me back to the good old times.'

During his time as an apprentice Mage, he was dispatched for one of these tests. Though he wasn't as fatigued, it must have been due to the village being rural and quiet.

'The situation here must be different.'

This was Mogrian province. One of the four largest region in the Empire, it was a so called 'Great Province.' The region was vast enough that there must be thousands children who had to take the test.

"Right, boy. Come closer."

With a gentle voice, the Mage called Ian. Other than him being a Mage, he seem to be a well mannered noble. Though Ian was a Mage, the arrogance of most Mages knew no bound.

'If they could be worse than the nobles, than they did.'

Mages were precious. So rare were they, that most common folks could hardly meet one in their lifetime. With the value of a Mage, their headcount were small in itself. Among the Mages, 90% stayed in 1st Class for the rest of their lives. The authority of the 1st Class Mage was the next best thing to being a minor noble. From 4th Class

onward, they did not even fear the power of the greater nobility.

“They do say the number of Mages is proportional to the strength of the nation.”

Therefore, they conducted the mandatory Mana Reaction Test. To find and nurture just one more Mage in their nation.

“For now, won’t you bow your head for a bit?”

The first attribute, ‘Mana Brain,’ A part of the brain that took charge in manifesting the magic. This attribute could not be acquired, the person was inherently born with it.

“I will prod your head slightly with Mana. You could feel dizzy, but it’s momentary so do not worry.”

Speaking as such, the Mage laid his hand on Ian’s head. As he describe, Ian started to feel dizzy. This was an obvious outcome, a side effect of the Mana Brain being stimulate

“Good. Now, turn so that your back is facing me.”

The second attribute, ‘Mana Heart.’ The place that stored, generated and circulated Mana, an all-inclusive organ. The place that he pierced the spell engraved dirk.

“Hmmm.”

The test ended after the proof of the existence of Mana Heart. If both attributes were proven, the examinee was given immediate privilege of attending the Magic Academy.

Like in the past, Ian did not feel confident. He felt something was ‘lacking.’

“Why did you stand?”

Ian was hesitant seeing the Mage hurrying about. As if it reminded him of something, the Mage began spewing out words.

“Ah, I just discovered your Mana Brain. What does it mean? It means that life is about to turn about right in front of your nose. But only if, you have Mana Heart. So hurry about, and turn around.”

The Mage never did imagine a first reaction this year would appear. Hearing the part about his “life is about to turn about”, he hurriedly turned about to proceed with his Mana Heart test, but he had a higher ambition than a simple change in life.

‘A simple Academy admission is not enough.’

Ian needed the best possible lead, right from the starting line. While he was lacking in Mana, that did not mean there was no other means. Should he be a bit more bold?

“Uh, Mr. Mage.”

Decided, Ian opened his mouth. His childish voice still felt strange.

“There is something I want to show you.”

“A letter? Well, something like that.....”

Yes, there were many like that. Children bringing ‘letters’ or ‘gifts’ as respect. The even minded Ian also had experienced such. Without a doubt, this noble also had similar situations.

“Nothing like that.”

But, what Ian wanted to show was something completely different. Something that will increase his value exponentially.

Other than magic. What else?

Whooosh!

In Ian’s hand, a small fist sized fire erupted. A basic magic belonging to the 1st Class, ‘Fireball.’

“Fireball...?”

At the Mage’s reaction Ian was satisfied. In his other hand, Ian made a tear shaped water ball. This time, it was ‘Aquaball.’

“Double Casting...?”

The Mage's eye popped wide open. The Knights watching nearby was of similar disposition. This small boy was using magic? Not having entered the very door sill of the Academy, this boy was using magic during his Mana Reaction Test? And on top of that, Double Casting?

This was positively a huge incident with no such precedent in history.

"Even I don't really know."

The Mage's face was longing for answers, and Ian looked straight at the Mage's face without flinching. Without dropping one syllable, Ian continued.

"It just started working one day."

".....What?"

What preposterous nonsense was this boy speaking.

This boy, he was suspicious.

"Perhaps, did someone teach you such skill?"

"Not really. I don't recall something like that happening."

"Really?"

The Mage casted Interrogation Magic as he asked his questions. The magic checked the instinctive biological response such as the spike in heart beat or the dilation of the pupil.

"Think clearly before you answer. Any lies can have you declared for treason. What I mean is you, your family, even your neighbours could be executed. "

The Mage's word were not those to incite fear. With the benefits beyond one's imagination, so too were their existence strictly governed. Every Mage was under the administration of the Empire and the Ivory Tower. Every unregistered Mage was considered a traitor. So too, was teaching magic without permission. This extended to dedicated organization setup to observe their every actions.

“What reason do I have to lie to you?”

Ian knew the reality of it all better than anyone else. He even acknowledge the Interrogation Magic that the Mage invoked. But he still carried on with his falsehood.

‘Because I truly did not learn it from anyone.’

The basic invocation of Mana and several magic spells. All of it, he had realized through self study in his previous life. All of it, in exactly 3 month period between passing the Mana Reaction Test and waiting for the new season of Magic Academy.

‘Peerless genius doesn’t sound so bad.’

The first Ian was a certified genius. Was he not the first 8th Class Mage humanity ever seen? Just that in his previous life, he was an ordinary genius. In this new life, he would be a legendary existence among the Mages, a genius among genius that would associate him with the ‘First Mage.’

“Hu hu...”

The Mage’s mouth split open and out of it, laughters came. There were so many suspicious angles with the story the child was spewing. But the problem was, the Interrogation Magic was not working. Could the child somehow control his basic instincts intentionally? To fool the Interrogation Magic?

‘But that’s preposterous.’

The Mage could affirm, such act was impossible. Only spies who assimilated daily and the utmost, extreme training could be this unresponsive.

‘There are two conclusions to this.’

Either this boy was history’s most premier spy.

Or.

‘He possesses talent of the ‘First Mage.’”

A legend any Mage would have heard at least once. To the common folks, they believed magic had its root in the Dragons. For the Mages, they believed in the 'First Mage.'

'Both side are beyond my wildest imagination.'

As the Mage's inmost thought was beginning to skew to the later...

"Ple, please stop this!"

"Shu, shu! Don't you know there are important people inside?"

The sound of squabble could be heard outside. From the soldier guarding the flap of the tent, and Ian's mother.

CHAPTER 3

A PLACE WHERE BLOOD CAN'T BE SEEN (1)

“Mother?”

Without any hesitation, Ian rushed out of the tent,

The three knights and conducting mage followed.

“shu! shu! stop playing hard to get! I know you miss the touch of a real man”

“wh, what...?!”

What humiliating words.

Seems he laid his hands on mother's body.

“Come on, have a listen. Don't you feel lonely at night after being a widow for 7 years? there are plenty men who will sneak into your bed if you just let the door open... huh?”

The soldier who was sexually insulting mother was stunned.

Of course, because of the mage and knights.

Seems he doesn't care at all about Vanessa's son, Ian.

“What is this ruckus?”

One of the knights, who is named Aaron, asked.

There was a natural-born solemnness in his low voice

“I... it is nothing, sir! This degraded kitchen maid dared to look inside the tent, I was scolding...”

“Degraded?”

Ian cut into his excuse.

“How dare you! Don't you see I'm talking to Nobles here?”

Now he started rebuking Ian.

Totally different reaction from the soldier compared to the attitude he just showed to the mage and knights.

Well, I understand that's how the rank system works

Then...

"Mr. Mage."

"hmm?"

"Am I mage now?"

The mage can't give a straight answer to the sudden question of Ian.

Can this little boy be called a mage?

'Far from officially being enrolled as an mage, he hasn't even received admission to the Academy'

Officially, he is not a mage yet.

However, he self-studied the management of mana

Furthermore, he is able to cast 1st class magic.

'The Royal and The Ivory tower will be alerted.'

To adopt this boy into the Empire, by any means necessary.

The boy who contains unfathomable talents.

Literally, it is only an matter of time.

It didn't take long for the conducting mage to make a decision.

"He is a mage."

Official confirmation by the conducting mage.

Suddenly, all the eyes focused on Ian.

Although, Ian stood solid, without any emotional swaying.

He continued the conversation.

"So what is my rank now?"

“Equivalent to Empire Nobles”

“How about my mother?”

“Same. If you wish.”

Now Ian looked at the knights.

“Did you hear that? my mother and I, from now on, are Noble.”

sururung!

While Aaron, who is sensible enough to understand Ian’s intention, drew the first sword,

sururu! sururung!

Two other knights drew their swords too.

“Insulting an Noble is applicable to instant execution.”

Aaron’s brutal declaration reached the soldier’s ear.

That was what Ian intended.

“uh... huh?”

The soldier still didn’t understand the situation.

After he rolled his eye few times, finally he was able to conclude this situation.

So, the boy is a mage.

Vanessa, is the mother of the boy.

So that means...

“Heeeccckk?!” (*E/N: just a moment of shocking revelation*)

Not just shocked, but he started to drivel on the ground.

“P... p... ,please, please spare my life!”

He quickly bowed down, hammering his head on the ground

Now, the apologies were targeted to Ian, neither knight nor mage.

The tide has turned.

“Please, mercy, then I will...”

“Why do you apologize to me?”

“I will never forget this grace... I beg your pardon?”

Ian indicated to his mother and spoke quietly.

“It is not me who you should apologizing to.”

“...Ah!”

The soldier now turned his body to Vanessa, and repeated what he just did to Ian.

“Please, please forgive me! please just give me a chance!”

He totally lay on the ground hammering his head into the ground.

Begging for his life with a servile voice.

“I... Ian. You don’t need to do this much...”

He was so desperate that even mother who was receiving the apology felt uncomfortable.

Actually, even if he just said sorry, she would accept it.

Now I remember.

‘Right. Gentle and kind, that was my mother.’

If I execute him in front of her, she will struggle with nightmares.

So, it is not a good time to execute him, not now.

‘I’ll shed blood, in a place where blood can’t be seen’

The promise of my second life was carved deep in my heart.

‘For now, my mother is the priority.’

Suddenly, Ian felt sorry for his mother.

In his former life, he couldn’t protect his mother.

He was immature, didn’t understand much.

‘At that time, I was too young.’

In his former life, Ian was an newbie, just entered into the academy.

He didn't tell anyone that he self-studied the fundamental management of mana and 1st class magic, actually, he couldn't.

'I was afraid, since I was young.'

Blinded by the fear that he might be rebuked about it.

So he had spent another whole year on magic theory class with other kids, in his former life.

As an ordinary mage apprentice, neither superior, nor inferior.

'Of course, no privileges was given to her like nobles.'

Mother had left Mogrian village.

She no longer needed to work as a kitchen maid, but that was all.

She spent 1 year alone.

'She didn't get to enjoy any luxuries.'

After 1 year, when he finally became a 1st class magician, he finally received the rank as high as nobles.

Then mother passed away from an illness.

Even if she had a greatly talented son, she never had a chance to be treated as a noble.

However, this time, history will be changed.

"hew.'

After recalling the bitterness of his former life,

he sit squatted in front of the soldier.

"Listen."

A whisper only the soldier can listen.

"I exactly know how rubbishes like you think about my mother, saying dirty jokes about her."

Then he made an eerie face at him.

No one would have imagined such an expression came from an 12 years old kid.

“So what you saw, and heard today, relay it to the bastards like you.”

The soldier nodded crazily, as if he going to break his neck.

From his shaking two eyes, his desire of survival was reflected to Ian

“I will watch you.”

Then, Ian stood up and said to knights

“I think this is enough.”

At Ian’s word’s, knights sheathed their swords.

‘Th, thank you! Thank you! Thank you for my life!’

Although Ian stopped the execution, the soldier kept begging his life, to avoid Ian’s reconsideration, just in case.

“Is that little boy a mage?”

“The son of an kitchen maid?”

“Shut your mouth. Didn’t you see that the soldier almost lost his neck?”

People started whispering to each other, and it seems there was no sign to the end of it.

Today’s story might be spoken by people for a while.

“Mr. mage, are there any more tests left?”

“...huh? N... No. It is all done.”

“Mr. Mage, if you’ll excuse me, I better return to my home. My mother seems quite frightened.”

“Yes, as you wish. Ah! wait, hold on a second.”

The mage suddenly stopped Ian and asked the knight, Aaron.

“Sir Aaron, please escort the boy. I will contact you later through the crystal orb.”

Aaron obeyed the order without question.

It couldn't be refused, and also it was his duty.

"Ok then, I better go now, Mr. Mage."

Ian left the area by escorting his mother.

A Kitchen maid's son, escorted by a royal knight!

Due to such a rare sight, People can't take their eyes off them.

'What a surprising boy, in many ways.'

Soon, the report of the conducting mage was sent to The Royal, and The Ivory tower.

CHAPTER 4

A PLACE WHERE BLOOD CAN'T BE SEEN (2)

"Damn, bastard!"

At midnight,

The soldier who almost lost his neck,

'Jonathan' shouted in the small Inn located at the corner of the province castle.

He was already fully drunk, with the soldiers who were on their day off.

"How dare he, I will show him who I am!"

"Calm down, buddy. I'm afraid that you are gonna lose your neck for good."

"Shut up! Who's side are you on?"

He raised his voice, neglecting his colleague's advice.

"We don't take any side, we are just scared that the sparks may fly in our faces. Just take care of yourself, and forget about it for now. The one you are trying to fight against is a mage, buddy. A MAGE."

"Humph! Take care of myself? a MAGEEE?"

Gulguk Gulguk

Jonathan emptied the whole jug quickly.

"Bullshit!"

He smashed the jug on the ground.

Seems he didn't keep Ian's warning in his mind.

"Damn! You just ruined my mood. Hey Innkeeper! I'll pay for it later!"

"Sir, It is already been a month that you..."

"Do you think I'm a thief? Huh? I told you I'll pay for it!"

Seems he hasn't paid for a month.

As a small business operator, they couldn't dare to anything against a province veteran soldier.

"Sigh..."

After Jonathan left, the innkeeper sighed deeply.

The other soldiers also shook their heads.

"Humph, he boasted a lot about connections with a noble, now look at him."

"Even the noble he bootlicked won't be able to deal with the mage."

"Are you serious? Not just that small noble he bootlicked, but even the great landlord has to crawl under the Ivory tower. This time, Jonathan is in big trouble, hahaha."

Everyone now started to run Jonathan down.

Jonathan must have had a bad reputation between colleagues, too.

"By the way, Vannesa, that chick now got the jackpot."

"I was wondering the first time when she fell in love with some ugly man who looked like an oak, who knew he gave birth to a mage! If I were female, I would have rushed to him as well!"

"What was that oak-like man's name? He had a sir in his name as well, didn't he?"

"Page... ah! Fran Page!"

"Oh yeah! you brainy."

From Jonathan, now stories moved to Ian.

"Was that man a mage as well?"

"Stupid man, do you think a mage always has an mage son?"

"It's not?"

"In most case the son is just ordinary man."

"Are you joking me? How do you even know that?"

"Ahem, There are always ways to know."

While discussion of the fat soldier had started, Jonathan was walking street fully inebriated.

“I... I will do any means necessary!”

Even walking straight seems hard for Jonathan now.

“In front of that brat... I’ll... with Vanessa... *burp*”

He now hiccuped and shouted loudly.

“Hehehehe!”

Jonathan started making a lusty face.

Then he stopped at an riverside.

He wanted to pee in it.

“Why is it uneasy to untie? Do you underlook me as well?”

Now he started to rebuke his waist belt as well.

Well, what a shame to him.

“*burp* First was that mage, now you make me beg...?”

“Didn’t I tell you before? I will be watching you”

A sudden voice came from his back.

It was that moment that Jonathan looked back urgently.

“...!”

“Paralyze.”

Jonathan’s body paralyzed and he couldn’t move his body anymore.

He can’t look back further, can’t run away.

Only thing he could do was breathing.

“You won’t able to move for a while. That’s how this magic works.”

The voice of that little boy was enough to understand situation.

Again, the mage, Ian.

“What was it again you said? What will you do with my mother, in front of me?”

“Urghurgh...!”

Jonathan struggled against the magic.

A vein popped out on his forehead.

“Here is the story of Jonathan. One day, he was insulted by the son of degraded kitchen maid, he drank that night to forget the humiliation. He drank until he became totally unconscious, and there were witnesses at the inn.”

It was the story of the Jonathan today.

“Even though he lost control, he wanted to pee and his body instinct led him near the riverside. However, the riverside was slippery, and there was no one who can help him. Hmm, Indeed, it looks quite dangerous, for a fully drunken man.”

Ian finished the story, then pushed Jonathan into river.

splash!

Jonathan fell into river and his head reached the river first.

If Ian left him like that, he will drown.

“I thought about it a lot, should I shed blood again? The reason I researched the dragon chant, was to erase the blood on my hand. If I can turn time back, I swear that I will not shed innocent blood, make my own unregretful choice.”

The voice was small, Jonathan might not be able to hear this story.

“But actually, probably that’s not I wanted. Now I can see that thanks to you.”

Ian continued his story.

Maybe, it is now his soliloquy.

“I found that I haven’t wanted to erase the blood. But just don’t want others to see the blood on my hands. That’s what I didn’t like.”

Another face of Every War hero.

A stigma, that innocent victims were involved in his massacre.

Now, Jonathan’s struggling nearly stopped

“By any means, do not forgive my action. A man who poisoned me once told me this as well”

What was the Emperor’s thought?

Now, Ian was able to guess it slightly.

Ian returned to the Inn, not his house.

The size of a little cottage the mom and son had was too small, to host Aaron who has a big body.

So they decided to live in a nearby inn.

Ian and his mother used the same room and Aaron stayed next door.

‘I feel a headache.’

Ian safely arrived to the inn.

He had felt the headache since he come back to the inn.

It was a reaction due to insufficient mana in his body.

‘Didn’t expect one paralyze spell to have emptied my mana’

He expected he won’t be able to use it twice, though.

A little boy’s body, who hadn’t started ‘mana breath’ yet.

Quantity of mana in this whole body must be small.

There was still a limit for Ian’s body, although it has potential to become 8th class later.

‘It’s fortunate the reaction ended as a headache.’

As the red heart cycles the blood flow, the Mana heart stacks, and cycles the mana.

Of course, there is a limit to the stacking of mana as well.

Mages called it ‘mana pool’.

What Ian only needs to improve now was his mana pool.

He still remembers all the spell mechanism’s.

‘I better start mana meditation from now on.’

There were a few ways to increase mana the pool permanently.

Mana breath was one of the most standard ways to increase it.

A Special way of breathing that stimulates the mana heart which is located inside of the heart.

Specifically, the mana breath that Ian invented was superior.

Much more efficient compared to academy's mana breath.

'I often imagined, what if I invented this mana breath earlier.'

He invented this mana breath when he was 34.

Even starting the new breath late, it allowed him to grow further.

'What level can I reach from now, this time?'

Furthermore, an unprecedented genius young mage now goes to the academy.

They will support him as much as they can.

'I can engross many elixers. in addition, even artifacts.'

How much stronger can I be ?

I couldn't even imagine the result.

'Let's start.'

Ian sat down.

It was necessary to do mana breath to calm down his headache.

Ian tried to be as quiet as possible to avoid interrupting his mother's sleep.

He can see that her face became well.

Would it be because of the brighter future for her only precious son?

It seems she forgot about the soldier.

'That's a relief.'

First day he time traveled,

He felt comfortable and started to focus on the mana breath.

CHAPTER 5

GUEST TO THE HOUSE OF MOGRIAN (1)

The great continent was divided into three countries.

The Greenriver Empire, The Coldwood Empire and The Republic of Lo.

All of these countries operate an institution, called a 'communication post'

It worked as an 'emergency calls' for each country. These posts were held on specific places within certain distance from others, to supplement the communication magic (which has limited range) by relaying from post to post.

Thanks to the communication post, The Royal and The Ivory tower were able to receive the report before the afternoon.

"What are your thoughts? Tower lord?"

Great capital of Greenriver, 'Greenriverdium.'

Where the most highborn rules the country.

At the royal office, 'Terry Greenriver' asked.

"Nothing is certain yet, your highness."

An old man with a white beard spoke uncertainly.

The man was a tower lord of The Ivory tower, 5th class archmage, 'Habert.'

"But,"

"But?"

The middle aged emperor glanced his eyes with interest.

"In human's history, there were only a few mages who have managed to reach 5th class. Fortunately, this little old man became one of them."

"Stop boasting. Do you think I wouldn't know that?"

"Originally, mana is the energy that flows with the blood. When you're able to control

it, the road of the mage starts. Step by step, with the help of spells, you are able to learn how to stimulate the mana brain, then eventually how to cast magic. In most cases it is taught by the academy. I wasn't an exception of it, and so do other mages."

"Continue."

"However, the boy said he awoke it himself, without any help. Furthermore, the report said, He can cast 1st class magic fluently. Just like, 'The first mage.'"

Once upon a time,

The first mage who had no one to teach him magic.

He must have had to have found the way himself.

How to manage mana, and also, cast magic.

A legend amongst all mages.

"The first mage? Do you mean dragon?"

"The existence of dragon is just an illusion. However, we know there was an first mage. There must be a beginning of magic so it has been succeeded till now."

The Emperor nodded as he agreed.

The tower lord continued talking.

"Using common sense, regarding it as a wrong report makes more sense..... However, it should be true. The conducting mage was a wise man."

"There is no reason he would dare to make a fake report."

This time, the tower lord kept silent.

He didn't agree, but neither disagreed.

"So it must be true."

"There is nothing confirmed."

"Well, then let's pretend it's true."

Because of the persistence of the emperor, the tower lord laughed with bitterness.

"ONLY IF, the report is very true, then..."

“Then?”

“It is indeed that the boy bears dangerously extraordinary talent, that’s my answer.”

“hmm...”

The Emperor started thinking while tapping his finger on the throne.

He doesn’t care whether the talent is true or not.

He’s already assumed it is true.

“Crown prince, are you there?”

“Yes, father, waiting for your further instructions.”

“Come in.”

The door was opened, and the crown prince, ‘Hayden Greenriver’, walked into the office.

His good apperance with golden hair, inherited by the royal blood, was impresive.

“I’m at your service.”

“Right. Prince, sorry about that, making you wait outside for a while.”

“I’m okay with it. How can I be of service?”

The crown prince asked in hurry.

Not because it was an urgent situation, but his own impatience.

“Whent was the last time you went outside of the palace?”

“Yes? Uh... it was... uh...”

“Wasn’t it the inspection for huge lean year?”

“Th, that’s right, father!”

“It already has been 5 years... time goes by fast.”

After the emperor realised the flow of time shortly, he continued the conversation.

“I want you to go outside of the place for the first time in 5 years.”

“...You mean traveling outside?”

"I'll lend you all the royal knights, three hundreds imperial soldiers and three 3rd class magicians, quickly move out to Mogrian province, and bring back the boy called Ian Page."

"I... Ian Page?..."

It looked like the crown prince has never heard of Ian Page.

The name everyone in all places have already heard of.

"Please don't tell me you haven't of heard his name."

"I... I apologize,father!"

"This is nothing to apologize... *sigh* forget about it. It may risk your life. I better ask the other princes."

"N,No father! Trust me, let me do this mission!."

The crown prince reacted sensitively when he heard the word 'other princes.'

His attitude has changed dramatically.

"I gurantee you to accomplish this mission with my best effort!"

"Ha Ha..."

By watching the crown prince moved so easily, the emperor felt bitterness.

It was his intention.

But...

'He is too easilyseen through.'

He still needs to learn many things to lead the empire later.

Every part of him doesn't satisfy the emperor.

Not in the eyes as a father, but in the eyes of an emperor.

'He worries me.'

Of course, he didn't reaveal this worry to the crown prince.

For now the best he can do is loving son as his father, not the emperor.

Supporting his son as much as he can.

Mostly, he needed talented vassals, who can cover his short sides.

Talented, who can serve him for long.

‘He better make the boy his loyal servant.’

It is hard to make someone loyal to him who has already grown up.

Because they would’ve already chosen their masters.

For example, the tower lord has chosen the fifth prince.

That’s why the emperor tried to send the crown prince.

If he can’t possess the carved gem, then he better take a raw gemstone instead.

‘I better teach it to him before he leaves.’

The Emperor ordered to the crown prince after having a long thought.

“Approved. Now go back and prepare for the mission. Traveling to the north side will be long journey.”

There was silence after the crown prince left the office.

“Then, If you will excuse me, I better off now as well.”

It was the tower lord who broke the silence.

“Why don’t you stay bit longer?”

“As you know, mages hate traveling around. If I don’t start to pursue them from now, It might be hard to arrange three mages on the mission, before the crown prince leaves.”

“Hahaha! Indeed. You may leave now.”

The Tower lord left the office. His steps, however, not headed to ivory tower, but the side palace, where the princes stay. Particularly, the palace of the fifth prince, ‘Ragnar Greenriver’.

“Hew!”

Ian focused on mana breath until morning without sleep.

Although he hadn't sleep, his body was fully refreshed as if he had deep sleep.

Fatigue had totally been removed, his mana was fully filled.

Clean skin and hair as if he had a bath.

In addition, the fresh scentsl arounds his body.

'This is the good thing about mana breath.'

More specifically, the effect of Ian's mana breath.

'Mother is still asleep... '

It's been a while he visited Mogrian since his former life.

He didnt not have many memories here, but it was his hometown.

'This scenary will be erased first as war starts.'

Mogrian was the province where the border connected with the border of another great empire, 'Coldwood.'

It must be strategic point for both ally and enemy.

There were no ways to avoid to war.

'By the way, they must have received the report now.'

He guranteed that the report of the conducting mage must have been sent straight to the Emperor.

Ian was confirmed by the mage even if he hadn't entered the academy yet.

This was part of the plan, the mage should follow as he intended.

'The current emperor must be desperate to find a young talented child.'

Not for him, but for his first son.

The immature crown prince, Hayden Greenriver.

'The old fox of ivory tower probably started to support the fifth prince.'

The old fox of ivory tower. Ian's expression that points towards the current tower lord, Habert.

‘They may want me as much as the Emperor does.’

Soon, the conflict between The Royal and The Ivory tower would start.

Since it happened when Ian was young, he couldn’t remember in detail.

Story that he read from the book or heard from Ragnar.

He just guessed the situation from those sources.

‘What I can be sure of is, whatever side I stand with, I will be welcomed.’

The primary object now is regaining the strength as former life.

He will stand any side that provides shortest way to recover his strength.

Whether emperor side or ivory tower. Or, stay neutral.

‘Whatever side I take, I won’t be controlled by them this time.’

After a thought Ian left the room quietly.

It was still too early, so the first floor was empty.

However, it sounded quite noisy out there.

The source of noise came from the street where door of Inn was.

‘What’s going on?’

Ian quickly focused mana on his ear.

He put his ear to the wall of the inn.

Because of the mana amplification, He could hear clearly the sounds.

“So is he staying in this inn?”

“That’s right. He came with the knight with the big body...”

“We came to the right location, then.”

Ian had no idea of the voice asking, but the voice answering was the innkeeper.

In addition, he could hear many voices from outside.

“Hmm...”

It was obvious that they came for Ian.

With the comrades.

“Mr. Mage, lets start.”

huh?Mage?

Start what?

Just then,

“IAN, MAGE OF THE EMPIRE COME OUT AND RECEIEVE THE ORDER OF THE EMPEROR!”

“Urgh!”

Ian almost lost his ear.

The sound was already amplified by Ian. Worse yet, the mage outside amplified once more on his voice.

It was the vocie of the conducting mage, who Ian met yesterday.

CHAPTER 6

GUEST TO THE HOUSE OF MOGRIAN (2)

‘Order of the Emperor?’

Ian expected they would take action quickly, but this was beyond his expectations.

Not even a day has past.

‘Are they trying to put dibs on me?’

Ian walked out the inn with a smile.

Tens of soldiers were standing out the door.

The province knights stood in line neatly.

Of course, the conducting mage and royal knights who were escorting the mage stood at the front of the line.

“Seems like you have already awoken.”

The conducting mage who saw Ian said.

“Our emeperor has sent this order to you. Follow me, kneel down your left leg and for the right leg... hmm?”

The mage didn’t expect Ian to know the royal manners.

However, Ian’s knowlege of royal manners were perfect.

‘What... He’s just a 12 year old kid... ’

Actually, royal manners weren’t that difficult to follow.

But, Ian walked out and kenlt down so fluently. As if he had done this a lot.

“Sir, what do you waiting for?”

“...Ah!”

The mage awoke from his daydreaming as Ian asked.

He took out the crystal orb from his sleeve.

Then he put his mana in it.

whir

With a weak vibration, it started to glow blue.

Then, the light started to squirm, then it formed a letter in the air.

‘A magical order,’ that was transferred by a communication post.

“Ian Page, the Imperial Mage, receive this order.”

When the light was almost finished forming the letters, the conducting mage started to read the message.

At that moment, everyone near by him knelt down.

In the confusion of moment, the innkeeper followed to kneel down.

“I order you in the name of the first stream of Greenriver, from now on Ian Page is constituted to the Imperial Mage, and approve of his name being recorded on the sacred list of the Ivory Tower.”

Record of the name of a kid who hadn’t even entered the academy.

It was a very shocking and unprecedented declaration.

“Secondly, I invite Ian, whose talent shines more than anyone, to the royal palace. I send my crown prince as a journey mate, I wish him to have a good time with the prince.”

The second message was shocking.

It was shocking enough to stir people in that area.

Ian barely managed to stop himself laughing at it.

‘Come on, the purpose of it is so obvious.’

Sending the crown prince as a journey mate?

He must be bringing an enormous amount of people together.

Bringing the other prince’s in other regions wouldn’t have this huge of a welcome.

“Lastly,”

The conducting mage continued to read the message.

The message wasn’t finished.

“Before the journey mate I sent arrives here, I order the House of Mogrian to protect and provide good quality service and supplies to Ian. Do their best on this order.”

The last part of the message satisfied Ian.

It means, Ian is going to stay in the province castle.

He needed a good place to focus on his mana breath.

‘It is hundred times better than a cottage or small inn to mana breath.’

If Ian was just a kid who only knew about magic, not politics, he would have moved and bowed to the direction of the palace.

“This is the last of the messages.”

The conducting mage ended his reading,

While looking at Ian carefully.

‘He is not an ordinary kid, indeed.’

Ian’s life dramatically turned into not just good, but unimaginably favored in just one single day.

However, he is far from being happy, but he just stays calm, during the whole message.

A normal person would jump with joy and crying in this situation.

‘Is it because he is an extraordinary genius?’

The conducting mage can’t imagine anything other than that.

Even he was a 2nd class mage, who is quite rare in the whole world, he felt a different level between him and the boy.

“Mr. Mage,”

The voice stopped his thinking.

It was the voice of the knight of Mogrian.

“May I bring him to the province castle?”

“Yes you may.”

As the mage allowed, the knight now headed to Ian.

Maybe due to the knight’s tanned face, he looks more like a mercenary rather than a knight.

“Arnold, the captain of the new Mogrian knights, came here to bring you by the order of the great Mogrian landlord.”

His attitude was quite gentle, compared to his appearance.

“According to the order of the Emperor, I will protect Mr. Page, to provide the best service and supplies possible for you. Needless to say, your mother will be treated same.

There was nothing to postpone.

My mother was a kitchen maid of the province castle.

But now she enters the castle as a noble lady.

She must feel very dramatic.

There were many people that lived in the house of Mogrian.

The landlord and his wife, children with the surname Mogrian, and numerous servants. Everyone of these people were now waiting for Ian outside of the castle, more precisely, waiting for the message of the Emperor.

“Why are they so late?”

“Of course! Using magic doesn’t mean his blood has been changed.”

“What’s the relation between being late and blood?”

“Because all the degraded people are born lazy.”

The children of Mogrian chatted.

Boys and girls who seemed to be aged between 12 to 14

It seemed the boy was the oldest.

“BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR MOUTH!”

The middle aged man who rebuked them.

He was the great landlord, 'Marcus Mogrian'.

"He is a mage and a guest of our house."

"B, but!"

"Huh! Are you going to against royal order?"

To him, there was nothing more important than the order of the Emeperor for now.

Not because of being loyal or catching a chance for a promotion,

But because he felt something serious was going on.

'This treatment is too dramatic.'

He knew mages were rare. They were the most dangerous weapons and the key to who leads the current human history. Nevertheless, he couldn't understand this order.

'What sort of talent makes him so special?'

He ended it with just a simple conclusion.

The talent that far exceeded humankind's knowledge.

The talent that the Royal and Ivory Tower desired so much.

The talent even many other countries will try to make their own.

The boy who contains that talent lived in the Mogrian province.

'There is nothing to lose from being friendly with him.'

The landlord ended his logic with that simple conclusion.

Making a good impression on the son of the kitchen maid.

If the boy grows bigger and becomes greater, the boy would have great benefits to him.

In other cases, there will be no risk to him.

The landlord remembered the face of kitchen maid.

She was famous as a beauty.

'I bet my daughter didn't leave her alone.'

The landlord sighed while watching his childish daughter.

She must have tried to make fun of her.

A daughter born with great jealous.

It worried him that she might have done some kind of real mean trick to the kitchen maid.

‘She said she never did such tricks, though’

He had no choice.

It was like the water spilled on the ground.

The only choice left for him was to act carefully from now on.

“There he is.”

The parade which included Ian came near by.

“Labi, Margaret! I warn you again, be careful with your actions. If you think you can’t control yourself, then just shut your mouth and do nothing.”

He couldn’t see the face of his kids.

Because his eye contacted with Ian.

As he had heard, a boy that was around 10 years old with a scruffy appearance.

‘I will provide good clothes, good food, good bed. If he wants, I will teach him language and horse riding, and manners. At his age, kids tend to aspire for those noble things.’

He was a mage, but still a kid.

It wouldn’t be that hard to please a little kid.

“Welcome.”

He made a warm and soft smile.

He greeted him nicely.

“The mage of the Empire.”

CHAPTER 7

GUEST TO THE HOUSE OF MOGRIAN (3)

The first gymnasium of the Mogrian landlord castle.

It used to be the space where knights practiced their skills.

Ian stood there.

He chose this gymnasium to practice his skills.

Mana breath was more efficient outside.

Also, It was necessary to increase his already keen sense of magic.

‘Today is quiet.’

Many servants had sneaked into this gymnasium recently.

What is the mage going to do at the gymnasium?

Everyone was wondering so.

‘I have no idea who spread the word’

Most of those sneaked in just saw that he was breathing.

Literally, breathing.

But the few people who successfully saw him casting his magic,

They spread rumors real fast.

“I saw him smash the target dummy with some kind of sphere with fire within it!”

“Ice shards were flying!”

“I saw some bubbles were...”

So on.

It wasn’t just a rumor,

Fireball, Aquaball, Ice spear and others...

The same level of spells that he showed during the mana sensitivity test.

He warmed up himself with such magics.

‘Well, It’s not that bad to be famous, actually.’

This time line wasn’t the peaceful era with united countries.

It was still the era of three countries.

As much as his talent spread, the more valuable he became.

The genius who had the talent of ‘The First Mage.’

It was not bad, until the countries united.

Of course there must be doubts and spies who were following him.

Especially from the Ivory Tower.

‘There is nothing they will find.’

What kind of tricks they were going to use?

He already knew every kind of trick they used.

He could handle it.

‘I could choose a safer way though,’

This time, he chose different path.

Although it could be dangerous, but it was the fastest way to grow.

‘Until I can cast at least one dragon chant.’

Whenever he reached that level, then he could rewind time when he wants.

Ian with the smile looked around.

Luckily, there were no servants hanging around.

“Let’s try this while it is quiet around...”

Ian stood up and lay his hand on the ground of the gymnasium.

woooooosh...

In blink of an eye,

Freezing air was assembled in his hand.

“Frost Nova.”

When he spelled the magic.

cra, crack, crackkk!

An absolute freezing energy spread to everywhere;

The ground of the gymnasium, the target dummy, and every single grass within range.

Everything near Ian started to freeze.

It was a spectacular moment.

‘Not enough.’

Ian’s face was full of disappointment.

He had reached this level within just 15 days.

It was a tremendously fast growth.

It could be compared to around the 2nd class.

However, he was still unsatisfied.

‘I would freeze the whole landlord castle, not just this gymnasium.’

It could definately be possible, if he had his former body.

His magic would freeze the whole landlord castle, without a doubt.

‘Something that can support my mana...’

Whether an elixer or aritifact,

He needed some kind of support to increase his skill that was growing faster.

‘An elixer is unavailable yet.’

The elixer that increase the consumer’s energy temporarily or permanently. Of course, ‘mana’ was included in the category of ‘energy.’

‘Untill I recieve the support from the Ivory Tower.’

Unless he received support from the Ivory Tower or the Emperor, it was impossible to use elixers.

Because it was precious as gold.

‘However, for artifacts... ’

Artifacts that contains hidden powers in it.

Most of it were possessed by high nobles.

Regarded as heirlooms of thier house.

‘Being honest, they are wasting its potential.’

During the unity war, the Ivory Tower persuaded nobles to lend their artifacts, which nobles were wasting, so that the power of mages could be enhanced. It was targeted to every noble in empire, without any exception.

‘And I was the one responsible.’

He read the lists of artifacts so many times.

Thanks to that, Ian still remembered the lists;

Type of power of artifacts, appearance of it, and the house who possessed it.

‘Mogrian possessed... a ring, wern’t they?’

It was a lower level artifact ring called ‘Mogrian Ring’,

I remembered it as the ring which could be the catalyst to the mana heart’s activity.

‘At that time, it was usuless for me, though.’

In his former life, Ian was a monster in terms of mana.

His nickname, ‘Half Dragon’, was because of his massive mana pool.

‘However, its value is different for me now.’

He needed any support possible for his mana

It was lucky that now he was in Mogrian castle.

‘The problem is how to get it.’

They had no idea of the existence of the artifact.

They just knew it as the heirloom of their house.

There were no way they would just give it to him, nor would they sell it.

‘Hmm... ’

He couldn’t think of any decent plan.

He decided to take more time to think about it

“Mr, Mr. Mage! Mr. Mage!”

Suddenly, someone rushed in to the gymnasium.

It was the old butler of Mogrian, with a white beard.

He called Ian urgently.

‘He better be careful.’

The ground of the gymnasium was full of ice now.

The effect of the Frost Nova magic still existed.

“Urgh!”

As he expected.

If he fell to the ground, he would injure the waist.

“Feather Fall.”

Ian quickly enchanted the butler with slow falling magic.

The body of old butler fell slowly like a light feather.

“Why did you call me?”

“...Ah! Mr. mage! Please help us!”

By question of Ian, butler became urgent again.

Without any pre-explain, help out what?

“Our landlord is missing in action!”

“What do you mean?”

“Th, that is he went to the Mogrian mountain for hunt...”

Summary of the old butler’s story was this;

The landlord held the hunting party periodically.

Not a normal animal, but the ‘monsters’ of the Mogrian.

However, the landlord hadn’t returned for a long time.

With the some knigts, few province soldiers and Labi Mogrian.

‘Mogrian mountain... ’

There must be only few goblins lived there.

And proper knights and soldiers lost by goblins?

The creature which had small body, weak strength, stupid brain.

Furthermore, they were cowards that never dared to strike humans first.

In addition, they don’t make big groups.

At most around 15-ish goblins.

Also, the landlord must’ve kept hunting periodically because there used to be no problem about it.

“By reports of scouts, there were trails. Few goblin corpses, and... human blood spreaded around.”

Were they really defeated by goblins?

‘It is not right time for him to die.’

The great landlord Marcus Mogrian supposed to die later.

In the former life, he was assassinated by an enemy country just before the first unity war starts.

‘Neither was his son.’

Ian still clearly remembered the story of Labi Mogrian.

The stupid boy who ran away just after war started.

He abandoned the Mogrian province.

He got executed as far as Ian remembered.

‘Periodical hunt means...’

The landlord and his son must have had this hunt in former life, as well.

It shouldn’t be effected by Ian’s revolution.

‘He may have come back alive.’

The future wouldn’t change by itself.

It seemed like he did not need to be worried.

“Isn’t there Mr. Marco here?”

It was the name of conducting mage.

He must have helped them in his former life.

So Ian better leave him to save the landlord.

“Unfortunately, the conducting mage left here for another mission...”

Did he leave the province?

Ian didn’t expect this.

‘This must be the side effect of the return.’

It was really rare that a conducting mage leaves the province.

Ian knew it well as he also conducted other provinces before.

The mission must be something related to him.

For example, sending the report secretly to the tower lord.

‘This must be dangerous.’

The early death of the landlord could change the future.

Ian must stop that with his best.

Knowing the future.

Wasn't it the most powerful weapon that Ian had?

Maybe as strong as his magical talent.

Maybe even stronger.

"So that's why I so urgently came to you without any excuse. Wishing that Mr. mage may know some special ways to find him... in our common ways, we couldn't find him."

Mages were a mysterious existence for normal people.

Also, there were words spread out that Ian casted magical spells.

So it was not strange they had believed that the mage would have a solution.

Especially, when they couldn't find any solution in this situation.

"Where was it?"

"Huh?"

"I will find him."

Ian spoke with confidence.

Not only the lost landlord, but his son as well.

He guaranteed the butler that he would find the landlord alive.

So that he could prevent the future from changing.

CHAPTER 8

GUEST TO THE HOUSE OF MOGRIAN (4)

The entrance to Mogrian mountain was connected to the rear side of the landlord's castle.

That place, which was usually quiet, was crowded today.

All the soldiers and knights, who hadn't departed for hunting, people in the household, wife of the landlord and the youngest daughter were there praying for the safe return of the landlord and his retainers.

"Ian?"

A lady's voice called for Ian.

It was his mother. She also came along with the people.

"I heard the story, so the landlord is still in the forest somewhere..."

"Yes, so I decided to help them find him."

"Are, Are you...?"

Vanessa's face turned pale.

"It's too dangerous! You're still young, and..."

"I'm okay, mom. Have you forgotten already? I am a mage now."

"But..."

It was natural for her to worry. Although her son is a mage with great talent, he was still her son, before he was a mage.

"Don't worry. I'm not like the others. I will come back, alright?"

After promising his mother of his safe return, Ian walked with the soldiers.

The first scout squad who had already searched the mountains looked very tired.

Scouts who still seemed to be energetic were the second scout squad.

"To start, lead me to the place where the trail stopped."

By Ian's request, a senior knight came out and said.

"According to the first scouts report, the trail ended completely. We only found a clue that there was an assault by many goblins..."

"I have a solution, so please lead the way."

The knight's face became uneasy, when he was commanded by young boy.

"...Yes Mr. Mage"

He calmed himself and answered.

The commander was the mage.

The mage who would take the journey with the crown prince.

The age wasn't important here.

If nobles had rank, mages had rank and power.

The power that might be able to rule the whole world, if there were enough of them.

'Humph, let's see, how great of a mage he is'

The senior knights didn't trust Ian.

Of course he might have had some talent, since the crown prince was coming.

However, the rumors of his magics in the gymnasium, the rumors that servants and butlers had spread, he didn't believe those rumors.

"Listen! The second scout squad."

But, the knight had to follow Ian's command.

He was a mage, and soldiers couldn't do anything about it.

The first squad hadn't found any critical clues.

It was unlikely the second squad would find something important either.

However, the landlord was missing.

The knight had to rely on anything he could.

"As Mr. Mage commanded, climb the mountain."

Knights and soldiers of the second scout squad rearranged their line.

Suddenly, just before they started their march,

“Th, there!”

Someone pulled Ian’s sleeve.

A girl with ginger hair, Only daughter of landlord, ‘Margaret Mogrian’.
By the appearance, she looked about 4 years older than Ian.

“My father... brother... save them, PLEASE!”

Her face was covered by her tears and snot.

“If you save them, anything, I’ll do anything for you! I, I can ask my daddy to give you money, lands and servants! So, please...”

Her attitude had changed completely compared to the morning.

‘I heard that she spoke to my mother badly.’

It sounded Margaret often acted badly to her.
Actually, more like she just revealed her jealousy to the beautiful kitchen maid.

‘Hmm?’

Ian found something on Margaret’s finger.
Precisely, the ring on her right index finger.
It had some special aura.

‘Mogrian ring?’

It must be the low level artifact, Mogrian ring.
It seemed the landlord succeeded it to the daughter, not his reclamer.

“I’ll find him for you.”
“Re, really?”

The confirmation from Ian turned Magaret’s face to bright.

“But, keep your promise.”

“I’m serious! Everything you want...!”

“Have a think about it while I am scouting.”

“Th, think about it?”

What is he talking about?

Margaret couldn’t understand. Ian added words to help her understand.

“I don’t want the things you have promised.”

“Th, then what do...?”

“That’s the thing you need to think about.”

Then Ian looked another side, and Margaret followed his eye sight.

There was Vanessa, whose face was filled with worry.

“...!”

She quickly turned away her eye from Vanessa, as she understood.

Her face revealed her complicated mind.

“And”

He continued the conversation. Margaret’s face contained little bit of fear of him.

“The ring.”

“Ri, ring?”

“Lend it to me.”

She felt embarrassed.

Not only her, but the people of Mogrian.

It seemd they had no idea of the existence of aritifact

“Why is that?”

“I can feel mana from it.”

“Mana?”

“It will help me to find the people. So...”

Margaret couldn’t decide easily.

It wasn’t just an ordinary ring, but the heirloom of her house.

The heirloom that her father gave to Margaret specially.
But Ian said it has some mana in it.
Mostly, he said it will help him to find her father.

“O, okay.”

The ring was handed in to Ian.
His finger was still too small, so he had to put it on his thumb.

pit-a-pat

Just after he wore the ring, he could feel his mana heart's beating.
This feeling, Ian liked it.

“Let's go.”

He turned away from young noble girl.
He stepped on the dirt of the mountain with the scouts.
Generally, the course wasn't that tough.
In contrast, there was a wide path-like a street.
It was the evidence that they had hunted quite often.

“Do we need to go in deeply?”

Ian broke his silence and asked the knight.

“It's not that far from here where the trail starts.”

“Does he normally start the hunt from there?”

“No, goblins usually come out from a deeper area... wait, that is strange”

The face of the knight became more serious.

“I heard that he went to hunt periodically.”

“Yes, every first day of the month. It wasn't anything special.”

“So they were all used to it. I mean, the hunting route of the hunters.”

‘Hunters’ indicated the landlord and his companies.
In goblins’ eye, they were just goblin hunters.

“So that means...”

“They might have ambushed them.”

“Are you saying goblins do ambush?”

The knight didn't agree with it.

“It's impossible that they can come up with such a plan...”

As it was well known that their intelligence was quite low.

As a humanoid monster, they had some kind of intelligence, but it was only estimated to be around the same as a 3 year old boy. These creatures dared to have the courage to strike first, and ambush the hunters by analysing the route?

‘Impossible.’

Unless it was the Hobgoblin which lived in the southern great grass field, far away from here, It was nearly impossible for goblins who lived within the province. When Ian's thinking reached to this point,

“Here, as you can see, all of this area is...”

The scout team and Ian reached the point.

Human's red blood trails and goblin's green blood trails...

It was obvious that there was a battle.

However, there were no human corpses.

There were only goblin corpses on the ground.

“Had our side's victims' corpses been already collected?”

The knight shook his head.

“We couldn't find anyone when we first found this area.”

It meant goblins took them all.

Whether alive or dead.

“There are so many strange points.’

Firstly, the scale of the battle was too big.

There are more than ten goblin corpses around here.
When they assaulted, there must have been hundreds of them.

‘They don’t make a group like this.’

They usually formed as a small village and hunted animals or collected berries.
However, this trail showed that there were hundreds of goblins that assaulted them.
Ian was quite curious about this.

‘Is there someone who rules them?’

Having high intelligence, power and desire to gather all the goblins around the mountain. The ‘high class creature’ which had charisma.

“Is there any other monsters living in this mountain?”

“As I know of, none.”

“Hmm.”

Thinking wouldn’t solve this problem.
Now he had to take some action.

“Conjure.”

With quiet spells, Ian raised up his index finger.
He started to draw the silver magical formula in the air.

“Wolf spirit.”

Once he completed the magical formula, he triggered his second spell.
Then the silver lights became thicker.
The magical door opened slowly,
The silver light came out from the gap between the door.

how – ow – wol

Suddenly, the soldiers were confused.
Strange growls came out from the magical formula
It was the howling of a wolf.

“What? Where are the sounds coming from?”

“Didn’t he say wolf spirit?”

“But it sounds a bit weird...”

When the whispers became quiet,
Something small came out from the formula while struggling.
Then, *plop*, it fell to the ground.

“Wo, wolf?”

As the soldier said, it was a wolf.
Out of nowhere, a wolf was summoned.
But, the wolf was little bit strange.
It was a wolf, but...

arrrf... arf?

Cute growling, with the size of a puppy.
Unsharpened teeth as it was not grown completely.
The tail was waving towards Ian.

“A pup...?”

As someone described, It was a pup.
Precisely, it was a ‘pup wolf spirit’.

CHAPTER 9

GUEST TO THE HOUSE OF MOGRIAN (5)

If Ian didn't say that it was a wolf, people would definitely have thought that it was a puppy.

A puppy which had sharp eyes.

That's what it looked like.

'In my former life, I used to be able to summon a much bigger one.'

For his current mana pool, it was enough.

Otherwise, he would be drained of all his mana.

'That's why conjure magics are not famous.'

Nintey percent of all mages normally stayed in 1st class.

So tomost of the mages, conjure magic was only used when you wanted to see cute magical animals to play with them.

"Wow... I haven't seen any such magic before."

"How about you? You came from the capital."

"You don't say! Of course I've seen it before."

"Ooooh."

Soldiers started to chat about the magic.

They must have been impressed by the magic.

"Come here."

Ian called the wolf spirit to where the blood was shed.

It ran to the owner like a puppy.

"These smells, can you find where they lead to?"

The wolf spirit sniffed around the area.

It tried to track the lost people by smell.

“Mr. Mage.”

“Speak.”

“I am sorry to keep bothering you, but we have already released hounds. But they couldn’t find the way. Goblins must have left some fake smells to confuse them.

So, it was of no use to find them with the smell.”

The knight said that indirectly.

What he said made sense.

However,

“People say a dog smells a hundred times better than a human, right?”

Instead of an answer, Ian asked a question to the knight.

“That’s what I have heard.”

“A wolf spirit smells a hundred times better than dogs.”

“Is, is it true?”

“I read it from a book.”

“...Yeah?”

“‘Everything about magic,’ It’s a famous book, you know? Archmage Luke wrote it.”

“I, I know of it, but...”

He said it confidently, but was all that confidence from the book?

The knight looked at the wolf spirit.

It’s cute sniffing made light of this serious scouting mission.

Look at its little steps.

‘Really? That creature?’

Furthermore, he said he read it from a book.

Well, the knight knew that the book was famous.

Even the knight himself had read it.

The book which described many kinds of magic.

It was written by a legendary mage.

But still... damn.

Can Ian really be trusted?

When the knight's doubt was growing larger.

Howl... howwwwl!

The wolf spirit stopped sniffing and started to growl.

It sounded like it wanted them to follow it.

It was.

"Let's move."

Everyone, including Ian, started to move.

The wolf spirit lead the way.

By moving around busily, it kept finding the trails.

It must have been similar in the world of his former life.

The conducting mage Marco, must have chosen the same way.

sniff! sniff!

It ran through the forest relentlessly.

Animals of the forest saw its body and ran away.

Even beasts were no exception.

Although it was a pup, but still it was a spirit of the beast.

It looked like any beast could swallow it with a single bite, though.

pant pant

The soldiers' breath were getting rough.

Going deeper and deeper into the forest.

If people went further, they might lose their way.

When they started to worry about how to get back,

grrrrr

The wolf spirit suddenly stopped.

Not just stopped, but it took an alert position.

"Stop."

By Ian's order,

"Halt!"

The veteran knight stopped the others.

They lowered their bodies.

rustle, rustle

Ian carefully stepped forward.

"A valley?"

In front of them, there was a huge valley.

It was so deep that no one could fall off safely.

There was a cave which was located on the valley's rounded wall.

It was the perfect place for a den.

"Look... look there!"

A soldier who was looking down the valley shouted urgently.

Everyone's face turned pale.

"Is, is it even possible?"

"Goblins..."

At the very bottom of the valley.

There was a shocking scenery that awaited them.

“I can’t even count how many there are...”

The goblins were gathered there.

It was simple to describe the situation.

But the problem was their numbers.

By glancing through, there were more than five hundred goblins.

At that moment,

Dooooom – Dooooom – Dooooom – Dooooom – Dooooom

To the heavy sounds of a drum, the goblins started to move.

Quickly, they formed a circle, with a gap in the centre.

Also, they made a way which lead to the centre.

Like trained soldiers, they moved neatly.

“Wh, what is that?”

At the spot where all scouts were looking, an unknown monster was moving through the way the goblins had made.

‘Hobgoblin?’

This time, Ian was also suprised.

Big as a male human, light pink skin.

It must be the hobgoblin that Ian had thought of shortly before.

‘But, how?’

Hobgoblins only live in the southern great grass field.

That’s what Ian had learnt before.

From now on, it seemed he was wrong.

‘So, it was acting as a leader to them.’

What he could be sure of was that it ruled over the goblins as a king.

The king of every goblin on the mountain.

Doom – Doom – Doom

Again, the drum started to bang.

More goblins appeared from the cave at the rounded wall of the valley.

They came out of the cave carrying something.

“Landlord...?”

The veteran knight said while standing up quickly.

It was the landlord, who was being carried by the goblins.

“He is still alive!”

“Also, our captain...!”

It was not only the landlord.

His son, Labi Mogrian.

James, the Captain of the Mogrian knights.

Also the other surviving knights and soldiers.

All of them were fettered and dragged out to the centre.

Kiak! Kiak! Kiak! Kiak!

The shout of the goblins shook the valley.

They started to throw filth at the lined humans.

The valley was filled with hatred and madness.

The execution of the humans had started.

srurung

The veteran knight drew his sword.

Others did the same.

“We need to protect our landlord!”

They started to approach the cliff to climb down the valley.

“All of you guys will die.

Ian told them.

There were too many goblins.

They would never win the battle.

“But we can’t just sit here and do nothing!”

Of course, they wouldn’t listen.

Everyone lost their mind after they saw the landlord.

Ian had expected this.

“Just stay here and watch.”

“What...!”

Those were Ian’s last words.

He moved down to the valley without any hesitation.

“M, Mr. Mage!”

“Feather Fall.”

The veteran knight shouted because of shock.

Because he didn’t climb down through the side wall.

He, literally, just jumped off.

It meant he would crash down.

“...huh?”

But Ian didn’t crash.

Instead, he was falling slowly, moving diagonally leaving a trail behind him.

It was the effect of the slow falling magic.

‘I will land at the proper place.’

At the very centre of the goblins.

So he will land very close to the landlords and other knights and soldiers.

He might be able to finish the goblins with a single blow.

By squeezing out the maximum power of the ring, there was a possibility.

Most of all, they were all gathered in a nice shape.

‘I need to draw my full power from the very depth of my mana pool.’

Ian started to draw in his mana.

The mana flowed to his right hand and it started releasing a freezing energy.

As it cooled, it formed icicles in the air.

“Kiak! Kiak! Kiak!”

As he approached, the shouts got louder.

The unique voice of goblins, which sounds like rupturing metal.

It wasn’t pleasant to hear.

‘A little bit more.’

Ian twisted his body, and sharpened his landing angle.

So that he can land at the very centre of the execution area.

‘A little bit more.’

He could see the landlord and people.

Still, there was a distance between him and the people.

‘A little bit more.’

Now he has almost arrived near them.

He quietly flooded his mana to his legs,

So that it could handle the shock of landing.

“Kiaaak?”

One by one, goblins started to recognise him.

A human who was descending slowly.

The Hobgoblin gripped his axe.

“Cancel.”

Ian’s body started to fall rapidly, because he cancelled the feather fall magic on him.

But everything was perfect.

The distance between him and the ground wasn’t long, and his legs were strengthened by mana.

These two were the only things he needed.

smash!

The landlord who had lost hope.

His young son and the other soldiers.

In front of them, Ian landed.

“Frost”

After landing, Ian lay his right hand on the ground.

“Nova.”

Ian’s Ice spell which smashed the gymnasium before.

The range of it had absolutely exceeded its original level.

Frost Nova.

Crac, Crack, Crackkk!!!

The freezing energy released from Ian devoured the goblins.

It had stronger power within it than the spell Ian casted at the gymnasium before.

It was the result of consuming every bit of mana within Ian.

“Kiiiikk!”

“Kiiiiaaaaaakk!”

The valley, which used to be filled with goblin shouts, became a freezing hell, filled with only screams of goblins.

“That is...”

The power of a mage that could only be imagined through books.

Scouts who observed its true power upon the valley.

They were speechless and blinked their eyes in astonishment.

The weapon in their hands seemed useless.

“...Mage...?”

CHAPTER 10

GUEST TO THE HOUSE OF MOGRIAN (6)

‘So this is the end of my life.’

The great landlord, Marcus Mogrian, shook his body sorrowfully.

What a shame, death at the hands of goblins.

All the nobles and bards would make fun of him and his house.

‘I should have saved my son, Labi, at least.’

Hunting monsters was just a hobby to him.

He had never expected that this hobby would ruin the future of his house.

“Kiiikk!”

He could see the goblin in front of him.

It was different from other goblins.

It had pink skin, big body and was skilled in combat.

Furthermore, it lead these goblins.

There was an ambush, and his troops had been defeated by the countless goblins.

‘The province must be informed... ’

He observed hundreds of goblins, and the pink coloured goblin which lead them.

They were prey no more.

They were like dangerous bandits now.

smash!

When he was about to give up on everything, he heard something smashing to the ground.

“Frost Nova.”

And then he heard the voice.

It sounded like a young boy's voice.

Before he fainted, he tried to see who the boy was.

He could only see the back of the young boy.

'That boy must be... '

Freezing hell has been spread.

The valley was filled with the desperate screams of goblins.

When he couldn't believe his eyes, the boy looked back.

"Daddy!"

Hmm? Daddy?

The voice wasn't the boy's.

Then where was it coming from?

"Daddy!"

The landlord opened his eyes.

He couldn't see the boy, any goblins or the freezing hell anymore.

The familiar room, was his bedroom.

"Margaret...?"

Margaret called her father desperately,

Since she saw the fainted daddy's body start to move.

"Oww... , What happened?"

A question which contained much confusion.

"Mr. Mage saved you, and brother as well."

"What about the others? Are they ok?"

"Well..."

People who were captured by the goblins all survived.

However, the soldiers who were assaulted at the very beginning, there were no ways to save them.

Even a mage couldn't revive the dead.

"How long have I been passed out?"

"You have been unconscious for two days. We were all worried about you..."

"Bring Hrothgar to me."

Hrothgar was the name of the old butler.

"Huh? But you better meet mom and brother..."

"I will. But there is something I have to do first."

Margaret stopped arguing with him.

Instead, she left the room to bring the old butler.

"That's weird, I haven't seen Margaret this obedient."

Some time later,

The white bearded old butler ran into the room.

"Sir landlord! Thank God you are well!"

"You must have had a hard time aiding me."

"N, no! It was just my duty. I'm just pleased that you woke up and are well"

The old butler was enthused.

The landlord patted his back.

"How many have died?"

"Sir..."

"I'm ready. Tell me the number."

"Twelve soldiers, and sir Lotten..."

Too many precious lives were sacrificed for his hobby.

What would have happened if the goblins wanted to execute everyone when they were assaulted?

Everyone who went for the hunt wouldn't have been able to avoid death.

'That's horrible.'

The landlord shortly paid silent tribute for the victims.

He was a calculative man.

However, all of his calculative actions were for his province and the people who lived there.

Many loyal people, who spent their life for the province, were dead.

He felt the heavy responsibility for that.

"Ok, has our house awarded the bereaved?"

"Yes. We awarded them with our best."

"Well done... Urgh!"

The landlord groaned while nodding his head.

His body hadn't recovered yet, he still suffered a headache.

The old butler looked at him with worry.

While shaking his head, he continued speaking.

"You said a mage rescued me, was it Mr. Marco?"

The landlord assumed it was Marco who saved him.

He saw a young boy in his memory, but he couldn't figure out if it was just his dream or not. Furthermore, Ian was just a kid. Even if he contained an enormous potential within him...

"No, sir. Because Mr. Marco left the province for another mission, I requested aid from Mr. Mage."

So it wasn't an illusion or dream.

"He saved us all."

“ .. ”

Now he realised the freezing hell that he saw was made by Ian.

Now he understood all the favor Ian received from the emperor.

‘I can see.’

The reason that Royals and Ivory Tower wanted him so much.

The reason that they ordered House of Mogrian to protect him.

‘Otherwise, other countries or powers will try to take him away.’

After the era of war ended, it had been 60 years since the world divided to three big countries.

Each of the three countries had been focusing their money and power to raise mages as much as they could.

No one knew when the next war would occur,

The war which could occur at any time.

Even at this moment, each country was spying on the other countries.

‘They won’t assassinate him. They will try to persuade him.’

It was the era of mages. It was mages who will decide the result of the war.

Mages of other countries were priority assassination targets.

Especially for a mage with great talent.

However, Ian was a kid.

He was still young enough to be persuaded, before being assassinated.

‘I owe my life to an unimaginably important boy.’

The landlord opened his mouth after a short pause.

“So where is Mr. Mage? I want to meet him face to face.”

“Eh, it is hard to meet him right now.”

“Why is that? Was he injured severely?”

“No, he is fine. But...”

The old butler stopped for a while.

Then he continued his words with an embarrassed face.

“He went out for... selling.”

“Selling?”

While the landlord was awake in his castle, Ian was talking with other people, at the valley which was once the den of goblins.

“All of theses corpses are of the finest quality! I haven’t seen anything like this”

A fat middle aged man, dressed in luxurious clothes, said to Ian respectfully.

“It should be. I froze them before they died”

“That’s right! What a wise decision you made.”

The middle aged man was a merchant, who operated the biggest trading company in this province, called the ‘Forian Trading Company.’

“How much would these be?”

Ian was trading now.

Why waste goblin corpses?

If it was left here, it would be rotten after it thawed.

It was better to sell it rather than just let it go to waste.

“Let’s see. Six hundred and twenty one goblin corpses of the finest quality, and then...”

Monster bodies were worth a lot.

Each part of the body was used by alchemists as precious ingredients.

And there were demands for it in other fields as well.

Of course, goblin corpses were not expensive.

It was a weak and common monster.

But this time, the number of corpses were huge.

“...one hobgoblin corpse. Wow! I didn’t expect to see this corpse in this area, really!”

Ian also agreed with it.

It was very unusual that a hobgoblin appeared here.

It needed to be examined later.

“Anyway, it would be worth at least a thousand gold...”

The merchant carefully looked at Ian’s face while he mumbled the end of his words.

Although Ian was young, he was a mage.

A mage who massacred hundreds of goblins alone.

He didn’t dare to cheat him.

It might increase his benefits, but he didn’t want to risk his life.

“Of course, as I said ‘at least’ a thousand gold.”

Ian hadn’t changed his face at all.

Was the suggested price unsatisfactory to him?

“A, a, as I said, it’s ‘at least’...”

“Ah, I am satisfied with the price.”

The price the merchant suggested satisfied Ian.

He was just thinking about what he was going to do with the money.

“Is there,”

Ian had decided and he continued his word

“Is there any good alchemist in this province?”

“What sort of...?”

“I am looking for an alchemist who is good at brewing elixers.”

Few days ago, Ian didn’t consider elixirs to improve his level.

Because he hadn’t had any money.

But now, the situation had changed. Maybe it was impossible to buy the highest quality elixirs, but he would be able to afford a few elixirs with an average level.

“Of course there is. He lives in the Lloyd village over there, he came from the capital. He said he came to this north side to find a specific rare herb. His name is...”

The merchant paused to remember the name of alchemist.

“Ah! Ledio. He’s called Ledio.”

Alchemist Ledio.

Ian quietly spelled his name.

He couldn’t remember anyone in his former life.

“If you wish, I can make contact with him for you?”

“No, thanks. I will visit him myself later.”

After Ian finished the conversation, he left the valley.

Dinner time of Mogrian castle was about to start.

The atmosphere of the province castle was filled with grief.

People had died, and the landlord was unconsciousness.

‘I wish he would wake up.’

The sorrowful heavy atmosphere caused Ian not able eat his meal properly.

Also, he couldn’t leave his mother alone, in the castle with such grief.

Ian moved towards to the castle quickly.

CHAPTER 11

GUEST TO THE HOUSE OF MOGRIAN (7)

“You should have seen it!”

“Come on, stop.”

“The ice came out of nowhere with a craccckkkk sound!”

“Come on, do you know how many times you have already repeated that?”

“Hundreds of goblins screamed!”

“Sigh...”

“It’s on another level compared to what I have read in the book!”

The sky was lit up with the glow of the setting sun.

Two soldiers were guarding the province castle.

The one on the left was a scout from the second party who went with Ian.

The one on the right was a scout from the first party who was resting.

“Even the knights were astonished!”

“So you are saying, that they mumbled ‘that is... a mage’?”

“That’s right!”

The soldier on the right shook his head.

He had already heard it many times.

He was interested when he heard it for the first time.

With the reaction, ‘Is it true? Really? What on earth! Amazing!’

Well, it would have been better if that was all that he had heard.

“I saved the landlord with him as well! Later, when I retire, I will write a book. The chronicle of The Mage and The Spearmaster! Yeah! Can’t you feel your heart beating?”

(E/N:isn't the spearmaster roan?, Cross novel references)

The soldier on the left spoke while drumming the ground with his spear.

It seems 'The Spearmaster' referred to him.

"The Spearmaster? Bullshit."

"Huh, what's wrong with it? I am really good at using the spear..."

"Do you even know how to write?"

"Hey! I am studying it!"

"Humph! Yeah, right."

While the two soldiers were talking,

Someone approached the castle.

It was a child with a small body.

"Mr. Mage?"

The soldier on the left recognized Ian straight away.

As he said, Ian was the great scout comrade who he has been talking about the whole day.

"Y, you may go in quickly! The landlord has woken up."

That was delightful news.

At last, Ian could have dinner without any pressure.

With a face sporting a smile, Ian stepped into the castle.

The servants' faces had changed.

The castle was filled with energy, which couldn't be seen until yesterday.

The vitality finally came back to the castle.

"Ohh! Mr. Mage!"

The owner of the voice was the old butler, Hrothgar.

"You arrived at just the right time."

“I heard that the landlord woke up while I was coming.”

“Oh, did you? Yes, what a relief.”

The old butler revealed his happiness.

He was the perfect man for being the butler of the house.

“Will the dinner start at the usual time?”

“Oh, of course. This time, the landlord has asked you to come have supper with him. It seems he has something to say to you...”

Something to say? Well, of course, Ian saved their lives.

Not just the landlord’s life, also those of his son, the knights and the soldiers.

It would be rather problematic if there was nothing to say.

“I will attend the supper.”

“Then, I will send a guide to you, whenever you are ready.”

Then Ian went back to his room,

It was a big room where Ian stayed with his mom.

“Ian? Did you just arrive?”

Ian felt relieved just hearing her voice.

As always, Vanessa welcomed Ian.

“Yes, mom I am...”

Suddenly, Ian stopped his words.

“That dress...?”

“Hmm? Ah, this?”

By rotating slowly, Vanessa showed the dress to him.

The reason that Ian surprised was because of the dress she wore.

She had refused to wear the clothes which were presented to her by the house.

However, the clothes that she was wearing was the clothing of nobles.

She was also wearing jewelry with precious gemstones.

“Does it look good on me? I am not sure of it.”

“It does, indeed.”

The beauty of the wearer completed the appearance.

There was no doubt.

“Does it? that’s a relief.”

“So, what happened?”

“Well, the little lady chose it for me.”

“Little lady?”

“Yes! Including the jewels.”

The little lady must have meant the daughter of the landlord, Margaret.

“Maybe she felt uncomfortable with the clothes I used to wear, didn’t she?”

Well, she must have.

She must have felt that way a few days ago.

Maybe her mind had changed now.

‘Well, at least she did a good job here.’

Ian looked his mother for a moment.

Her age was twenty seven.

She couldn’t be said to be young but neither was she old.

‘If she was born as a noble, she would be the star of the noble social party.’

It became obvious when he saw his mother fully dressed up.

Ian was the greatest mage of the continent.

So he had received proposals from many ladies, beauties who were called the flowers of the empire.

However, he could remember only a small number of the girls who were as beautiful

as his mother.

'I have no idea how I, the child of this beauty, was born with this appearance.'

Ian realized the weirdness of blood lines.

His father was once nicknamed "Orc".

While considering that, it was lucky that he was born as a man with an average appearance.

"Hmm."

He remembered the gold he had earned by selling the goblin corpses.

He had planned to use every bit of it to buy elixirs.

'I better leave some gold.'

He thought it would be better to leave some money to buy some presents for his mother.

He could earn more money whenever he wanted, by hunting more monsters.

"I think you better dress like that from now on."

"I... I don't think I'm suited to it."

"Come on mom, I can guarantee that you should feel proud of yourself".

"Wh, what do you mean saying that I should feel proud?"

"There is a saying that 'a genius already knows he is genius, and a beauty already knows she is a beauty. Rather, it is weird if they don't realize it themselves.' As you know, we are the genius and the beauty, aren't we?"

"This little angel! Are you showing off yourself because you're a mage now?"

She gently pulled Ian's cheek with an embarrassed face.

Ian didn't try to avoid his mother's hand, like a normal ten years old boy.

'At least, for mother... '

She must have felt weird about Ian who had suddenly changed.

He wanted to be a cute child for her this time.

Knock knock!

While Ian's cheek was being pulled, someone knocked on the door.

"Come in!"

As Ian shouted quickly, his mom released his cheek quickly.

"Mr. Mage, Mrs. Page."

A maid of the house opened the door.

She greeted them gently.

"Dinner is ready. Are you ready to go?"

"Yes, we are."

Ian and Vanessa followed the servant.

At the restaurant, The great landlord and his family, every one of them were waiting for Ian.

The food hadn't come out yet.

As the old butler informed, it seemed the landlord had wanted to talk with him first before the dinner.

"Oh! Welcome, welcome."

With a welcoming face the landlord greeted them.

Unlike when he greeted them at the beginning, this time he truly welcomed them.

"How are your wounds?"

"Thanks to many others who prayed for me, they are alright."

"That's good to hear."

"The grace I received, I really want to thank you for that."

With a gentle attitude, the great landlord thanked Ian.

His son, Labi, also bowed to Ian.

"You have saved the present, future and foundation of the Mogrian house. If I repay

this grace poorly, I shouldn't be called a great landlord of the empire."

The present of the House meant the great landlord,

The future meant his heir.

The foundation meant the knights and soldiers.

"I have thought about it. At first, I had thought about money and land, which is quite a generous repayment. However, I realized it would all be meaningless things to you."

The landlord paused shortly, while breathing roughly.

He still suffered from his wounds and the time he had been unconscious.

"Ah, please don't misunderstand. I'm not saying you have already overcome the human's common desire, or some nonsense like that. What I meant was that, as a mage, you can obtain it whenever you want."

It was true.

Even Ian had spoken similarly to Margaret.

Margaret's body shook a little bit as she remembered what Ian said.

"So, the conclusion I made was..."

The landlord spoke while putting something on the table.

It was an old ordinary wood box.

"Please open it."

The landlord looked at Ian which encouraged him to open it.

Ian already knew the content of it.

'Mogrian ring.'

He could realize when he looked at the box.

It was the box which contained the Mogrian ring.

'It was a wise choice to lend it once.'

After the event on the Mogrian mountain ended,

Ian returned the ring as he promised, while saying that it helped him a lot.

‘I was thinking about mentioning it later, anyway.’

He didn’t expect them to hand it over before he even asked.

With satisfaction, Ian opened the box.

As he expected, the Mogrian ring was sat in the box.

“I already heard the story. You said that you can feel mana from the ring.”

“I realized that it wasn’t an ordinary ring.”

“I hadn’t known. I just regarded it as an old ring.”

The great landlord paused.

He looked at the ring, the heirloom of the house, for a moment.

“What kind of power the ring contains? Is it helpful power to you, Mr. Mage?”

“Being honest, I may dare want to steal it.”

“Is it that much? That’s good to hear.”

As he was satisfied, he nodded.

“The ring, I will give it to you.”

Giving the heirloom of the house to an outsider?

It wasn’t common that that happened.

The heirloom included the history of the house.

Although, none of the family members of the house seem to be shocked.

They must have agreed with it before.

“But, isn’t it the heirloom of your house?”

“Please regard it as a sign.”

“Sign of what?”

“It is the sign that from now on, the mage, Ian Page, we now serve you as the ‘Eternal Guest’ of the Mogrian house.”

This was an astonishing promise that the great landlord had just made.

‘Eternal Guest’ wasn’t just a simple metaphor.

It was the eternal pledge that a noble of the empire must keep.

“Would you take this offer?”

The great landlord asked very seriously.

Everyone was waiting for Ian’s choice.

“ ... ”

Ian started to think.

This pledge is not just a simple repayment.

Because Ian knew the characteristic of the great landlord of Mogrian.

At the valley, He must have seen the enormous potential within Ian.

With this present, he was trying to make a strong bond with Ian.

‘It is not a bad offer.’

Honestly, it was quite a sweet offer.

One day in the future, it will help Ian.

Ian stretched out his finger.

Instead of answering, he wore the Mogrian ring, the ring of the pledge.

“We, the house of Mogrian,”

As the landlord saw Ian wearing the ring, he recited ‘the pledge of the eternal guest’.

“We will always welcome Ian Page, we promise that we will gladly stand by his side whenever he needs our help. This promise will continue from generation to generation, and from their generation to generation, in the name of the most northern stream of Greenriver.”

After the pledge, Ian became the ‘Eternal Guest’, to the great house of the northern territory, the shield of the empire, the most northern stream of Greenriver, the house of Mogrian.

It was the first step of the mage, Ian Page, which he had never achieved in his former life.

CHAPTER 12

THE VERY ANTITHETICAL ALCHEMIST (1)

After Ian was declared as an 'Eternal Guest' of the Mogrian house, the great landlord immediately arranged a convoy for Ian.

"I am not sure if we are the right people to escort him."

There were around a total of twenty people in the squad, including the veteran knight 'Eric', who went to the valley with Ian, and 'Luca', who called himself the Spearmaster. They travelled with him while guarding him and running errands.

"That's what I thought."

The soldier Luca replied to the veteran knight.
Both of them saw the freezing hell that Ian made at the valley.
The landlord commanded them to protect him?
A random wolf spirit, passing by them, would laugh, if it saw this situation.

"Perhaps, we are the ones who are being guarded..."
"I agree."

The convoy was formed with twenty people,
By following Ian, they were heading to the end of the province, Lloyd village.
He was going to meet the alchemist who the merchant suggested.

"What do you think about it?"

Luca asked Ian who was walking in front of him.
Usually, people got scared when confronting mages.
Especially, if they saw the scene at the valley.
But this soldier, Luca, he didn't seem to be scared of Ian,
Whether he confronted knights or mages, he was a very friendly guy.

'Does he dare to risk his life?'

As Ian had seen him, he could make a conclusion.
Soon, this soldier would be rebuked by nobles or mages with bad tempers.

“Is it still far from Lloyd village?”
“Yeah? Ah, we will arrive there soon. It’s bit far, yeah?”

Instead of answering, Ian changed the topic by giving him a question.
As Ian intended, it seemed that Luca forgot about the question he asked previously.
However, Luca felt different.

‘Hwoo! It makes me so nervous, indeed.’

By Ian’s question, Luca calmed himself.
Honestly, he was as afraid of Ian as the others.

Power was like a monstrous magic to nobles.
How would he dare confront such a person easily.
Furthermore, he hadn’t known him for very long.

‘But I have to endure. This is a chance. The only chance that is allowed to me.’

The reason that encouraged him to dare to risk his life, it was an ‘interview’.
An interview for his life goal!.

‘When would I have a chance to have a conversation with a mage?’

The dream he told his comrades about whenever he had time.
Writing a heroic chronicle after retirement!
Everyone laughed at his goal, but Luca was serious.

‘The Mage and The Spearmaster will be a masterpiece!’

The power of the dream was big enough to change his life.
He used to always drink whenever he got a day off.
Now, he learned writing skills whenever he had time.
The wage which was only spent on alcohol, was now spent to buy paper, books and ink.

‘Cheer up! I can do it! No hesitation! Go Go Go!’

With a small self encouragement, Luca grabbed his spear strongly.
Now the squads were close to the village.

“You will see the village when you climb over that hill.”

The veteran knight Eric said.

It was a very far away village, as though someone picked it up and put it away from the province.

He had only heard of it in his former life, but had never visited there.

‘The alchemist Ledio, was it?’

The alchemist who came from the capital and lived in Lloyd village.

According to the merchant, he moved here to gather some specific herb.

The herb that only grew in north land, Ian could list few herbs like that.

‘Specifically, the herb that can’t be found in other places would be...’

There was only one herb like that.

The herb with a body that was too frail to be transported.

The herb with sensitive characteristics that couldn’t be cultivated as well.

‘The flower of Randor.’

It was a rare herb,

But there was no known effect of it.

It was questionable if it should even be called as a herb.

‘Maybe he is not an ordinary alchemist.’

He moved to north side to gather such a herb.

Perhaps two possibilities are there.

He knew its usage, or was just curious about it.

‘Ee shall see.’

After he climbed to top of the hill, he could see the village.

It was the Lloyd village.

“Hmm?”

The village was in trouble.

Village people were forced to gather at the center, and there were men who were threatening the people with knives.

Even the soldiers who were stationed there were killed.

Surung!

The veteran knight Eric drew his sword.

These men were thieves.

“Take these youngsters only, we better go back now.”

“What about these chicks?”

“Look at their faces you fool. Would anyone buy them?”

A cunning voice.

It was the conversation between thieves who were committing robbery and human trafficking.

“Hmm, but what a waste.”

“Let’s sell these youngsters and quickly move to Coldwood.”

“Hehe! Yeah, that area has pretty chicks.”

There were five stationed soldiers and twelve boys who would be able to fight.

However, there were twenty one thieves.

It was a battle that they couldn’t win, compared to the number and combat experience of thieves.

Furthermore, they were assaulted suddenly.

“D... daddy!”

“Douglas!”

There were parents who tried to stop their kids being taken away.

One of these parents was the alchemist, ‘Ledio.’

He desperately held his son, ‘Douglas.’

“Give me the boy you bastard!”

However, it was a meaningless struggling.

This weak alchemist wasn't strong enough to hold his son from the muscular thieves.

“N... no! Not my son!”

“Shut up.”

smack! smack! smack!

The thief kicked Ledio's stomach many times.

“Hurkkkhhh!”

Ledio's eyes rolled up due to severe pain and he let out what seemed to be a deathlike groan

“This dying bastard dares to act against me?”

Before he got kicked, Ledio's face had already turned grey.

Furthermore, he was very skinny, like a wooden stick.

It was obvious he was suffering from a nasty sickness.

“Daddy!”

The young son, Douglas, struggled to escape from the grasp of the thief.

“Let me go! Let me go! Daddy!”

“Huh, they both are bitching a lot.”

The thief said annoyingly.

He drew a dagger from a sheath on his thigh.

“Would you shut the fuck up if your daddy dies?”

“...!”

With the threat, Douglas closed his mouth

“Say one more word, then let’s see what I would do.”

“Sniff...!”

“Oh? Did I just hear something?”

The thief smiled sinisterly, while revealing his dirty teeth.

He loved to steal money and rape a girl...

However, the most entertaining thing was this.

Killing, and playing around before killing.

Just like this time.

“You cried, didn’t you?”

“N... no...!”

“Wow, now you talk?”

He started to tease the boy.

“Tsk, That crazy dude started it again.”

Even other thieves looked at him uneasily.

When people were gathered, there was always at least one abnormal man.

“Finish it quickly and bring the kid!”

“Hehe! I know, I know.”

The thief crouched in front of Ledio, then said.

“Don’t worry. I will sell him at a good place.”

He whispered while showing Douglas’ face to Ledio.

“No... Douglas... Don’t go...”

Even he couldn’t control himself, he stretched his arms, to grab his son.

“Bye bye.”

The thief grabbed the knife in reverse.

He was going to stab the back of Ledio’s neck.

He loved decapitating people.

“D... daddy! DADDY!”

While the boy screamed desperately,

Peeerrrk!

It was a weird sound.

Not a sound of something being penetrated clearly,

Nor a sound of something being smashed.

Some kind of sound that was in between that.

The sound came from the thief’s head, while spreading his red blood everywhere.

“W... what was that? What happened?”

The thieves were panicking.

While looking around carefully, they reached out to the thief who lay on the ground.

“Ice...?”

It was an icicle, which had each side sharpened, that penetrated through the head of the thief.

Well, more accurately, his head was blown up.

“W... where! Where did it come from!”

The thieves looked around cautiously, trying to find the source of the icicle.

“T... there, over there!”

One of thieves found something.

He pointed to the hill side.

“T... the p... provincial army?”

The knights and soldiers rushed down beautifully.

That was the only thing they could see.

Because they were already panicked at the scene.

“W... why are they here!”

“Damn! Run away!”

Still, there was a long enough distance between them that they can run away from them.

That’s the conclusion the thieves made.

They were sure about it without any doubt.

Peeeeerk!

Suddenly, another thief fell down.

Again, it was an icicle.

Peeeeerk!

The icicles came spontaneously.

It never missed once.

Peerrrk!

They couldn’t figure it out, that the icicles were coming from the top of the hill, even at the moment when they were dying on the ground.

CHAPTER 13

THE VERY ANTITHETICAL ALCHEMIST (2)

“Not bad at all.”

On the hill, Ian was there.

He murmured.

Ian's mana capacity had overcome 2nd class, and now it had reached 3rd class level. Not only because of training, but also because of the big support from the Mogrian ring.

‘I was lucky I obtained it without any conflict.’

Ian was thinking of taking the Mogrian ring by any means necessary.

As he said to the landlord, he considered to steal it.

But he obtained it in a rather pleasant fashion, and with good benefits as well.

The sign of an ‘Eternal Guest.’

There would've been no better way to get this ring.

“Mr. Mage.”

They arrived at Lloyd village without any major obstructions.

The veteran knight, Eric approached Ian.

“Is anyone wounded?”

“Thanks to you, we had no chance of being injured.”

Eric said the truth.

The icicles that came from the hill.

They precisely targeted the thieves.

‘Thank God that he is on our side...’

Would other mages in other countries be as strong as him?

Eric was worried about the war which would occur some day.

He had better be prepared with a high-quality helm and shield.

“We’d better collect the corpses first.”

Ian, who had no idea what Eric was thinking, said.

“We will send our messengers to McSpadden at once. All these stationed soldiers came from that House, so they will take care of these corpses.

The house of McSpadden. They served the house of Mogrian, and managed the north-west side of the province. Lloyd village was managed by the McSpadden as well.

“I suggest you bury or burn rest of the corpses of the thieves, and let the village collect the corpses of the villagers.”

A fast and clear solution.

As a knight, he acted quickly and efficiently

“Do as you said.”

“Yes, Mr. Mage”

Ian accepted the suggestion of Eric.

Ian was considered as his commander.

Everyone in the squad regarded Ian as their commander.

His age wasn’t the problem.

‘I wish he hasn’t died.’

Ian looked around at the surviving villagers.

There are those that a relieved.

But there are those who are caught in sorrow with those who family and neighbors were killed.

Ledio must be one of them.

“Ledio! Buddy! Wake up!”

“Daddy! Daddy!”

Ian heard the urgent voices.

Ledio, it was the name of the alchemist.

Ian approached them.

“Hmm?”

The alchemist Ledio lay on the ground.
Ian was surprised when he saw his face.

‘This is... ’

Pale skin.

White hair.

Popped out eyebrow.

Sunken temples.

Thin, malnourished looking body.

‘Mana addiction?’

More commonly, it was a disease called the ‘Curse of God’.

As its name implies, only a few people with a specific body type got this disease.

The symptoms of the alchemist were obviously indicating that he was a mana addict.

The symptoms also showed that he has suffered from it for a long time.

‘It must be mana addiction.’

There were 4 body types.

Excluding the normal body type, there were 3 special types.

‘The body type which has both mana heart and mana brain.’

Mana heart, it stacks mana inside the body and cycles it.

Mana brain, which uses the stacked mana inside of the body and casts it to the outside of the body.

‘The body type which only has mana heart.’

As this type didn’t have mana brain, magic wasn’t available.

However, this type could focus their mana inside, and enhance their body with it.

Most of them grew to royal knights.

‘The body type with only a mana brain.’

The source of the mana brain was mana.

However, this body type couldn’t generate mana by itself.

Which means, it was useless.

‘It is rather problematic.’

To this body type, mana was vital.

If for whatever reason mana was given to above the correct dosage,

The leftover mana, which is stuck in the body, would keep stimulating their mana brain.

For their whole lifetime, and every living moment.

‘Literally, it is an addiction.’

Of course, It wasn’t a common situation for mana to be injected to into them.

The only one who could inject mana to them,

Was a mage.

‘I have seen a few mages who have nasty a characteristic.’

Ian bent his body in front of Ledio.

If he left him alone, he would die soon.

Although Ian couldn’t fix him, he could give first aid to him.

“Give me a second.”

Ian lay his hands on Ledio.

By injecting mana, he treated the symptoms first.

“Pant...! Pant...! Pant...”

Then, Ledio started to breathe calmly.

His face recovered from being deadly pale.

His body recovered quickly.

“Now treat him.”

“Yeah? Ah, Yes! Th... thank you!”

The man who seemed to be Ledio's neighbour,
He helped Ledio to stand up steadily while bowing to Ian.

"M... my daddy... Is he alright?"

The boy looked similar in age to Ian.
Perhaps, a little bit younger.

"For a while."

The permanent treatment of a Mana addict?
Ian knew nothing which could do so.
He only knew temporary treatments.

"S... so, again, he will be like that later..."
"That's right."
"..."

The boy made a crying face.
There was no choice for the alchemist.
The only choice left for him was injecting mana from mages or die.
He was only able to choose these two.

"Quickly... quickly I need to find the flower my father said..."

The boy murmured.
Ian heard part of his murmuring.

'Flower?'

The word, flower, concerned Ian greatly.
Would it be the flower of Randor?

'He said it as if the flower is treatment... '

Suddenly, Ian realized something.

'The herb which mana addicted alchemists are seeking.'

The herb, which his son regarded as a treatment for mana addicts.
To be a cure for mana addicts, what effect must it have?

‘It must deal with the leftover mana inside the body...’

Mana Neutralisation.

Ian was shocked.
The effect of a herb which could ‘Neutralize’ mana.
If it was true...

[A poison that neutralized the mana in the blood vessels]

The voice stirred in his memory.
Before he rewound time.
The moment he was poisoned by Ragnar.
Ian memorized his first sentence.

‘The poison I had.’

The deadly poison that Ragnar prepared,
To assassinate Ian, and to exterminate every mage in the world.

‘I better check...’

Ian looked at Ledio quickly.
It would be clearer to ask the alchemist rather than the boy.
Just then,

“Douglas! Where are you going! Douglas!”

The man who lifted Ledio shouted.
To the boy who ran out of the village.
He must have run to find the flower his father spoke of.

‘Dou... glas?’

Surprisingly, Ian was familiar with the name.

It was a common name in greenriver.
However, the current situation made his name special.
'Alchemist' and 'Anti-magic' herb.
These two keywords changed his name into something special.

'Royal alchemist, Douglas Hamon.'

He recalled the greatest alchemist in the history of the empire.

'Right. Now I remember.'

He spelt the name, Douglas, slowly.
Then he could remember details about him.

'He was a slave at the beginning.'

If Ian hadn't visited Lloyd village,
He would be sold as a servant by thieves.
Just like in his former life.

'Specifically, he hated mages.'

Only mages could inject mana into another person.
It must be a mage who made his father a mana addict.

'So truly, is he...?'

Ian looked at Douglas, who rushed outside.
Furthermore, he seemed to be similar in age as Ian.
Ragnar, Ian, and Douglas,
Everyone was around the same age in his former life.

"...haha."

Ian laughed like a madman.
The village he visited to obtain just a few elixirs.
In the village, he met a man who he totally did not expect.

'Ragnar, this time,'

The boy who had the talent to become the greatest alchemist of the Empire.
Also, the alchemist who will stand on Ragnar's side.
Ian pursued Douglas quickly.

'You won't be able to take him this time.'

CHAPTER 14

THE VERY ANTITHETICAL ALCHEMIST (3)

Douglas was running to the forest near the village.
Considering his age, he ran very fast.
He kept a good distance between Ian and himself.
However, Ian knew some tricks.

“Haste.”

He was a mage.
He approached Douglas very quickly.

“.....?”

As Douglas felt someone was following him he turned his head,

“Sleep.”

No more hide and seek.
It was a low-class sleeping magic.
It was strong enough for a young boy.

“The flower... I must find...”

He mentioned the flower again, even while he was losing consciousness.
The herb that would cure the disease of his father.
The flower of Randor.

‘Oops.’

Ian attempted to catch him with one of his arms,
Then he decided to use both of his arms to catch Douglas.

‘I still feel awkward.’

He often forgot that he had returned to being a young child.
This wasn't easily accepted by his body.

"Phew..."

After laying Douglas on the ground, Ian sat next to him.
Then he started to think deeply about this situation.
Firstly, the flower of Randor.

'The flower of Randor neutralizes mana.'

It was a vital herb for a mage.
He never knew about it in his former life.

'To a mage, it is a poisonous herb rather than a medicinal herb.'

Fortunately, it was a rare herb.
In addition, it was nearly impossible to trade or to cultivate this herb.

'Furthermore, its effect is unknown to most people.'

Even Ian wasn't sure about the effect of this herb.
Would there be anyone else who knew about the effect of this herb?

'I need to find out.'

The one who taught Ledio about the effect of this flower, or maybe a book, record or rumor, whatever it is, he must figure it out.

"Daddy... Flower... Uhm..."

Douglas said in his sleep.
Still, he was seeking the flower of Randor for his father.

'This boy is another problem.'

Ian looked at his face insightfully.
It gave him confidence about his previous guess even more.

‘If I removed the anger from his former face...’

Ian could easily visualize his future face.

But as he said, this boy didn’t have anger in his face, unlike his former face.

Douglas in his former life was filled with hatred.

Of course, he might have thought that he had hidden it.

‘What should I do?’

The deadly poison that Ian consumed in his former life.

It was likely made by Douglas.

Actually, it must have been.

‘He must have known the poison was for me.’

He hated mages.

He must have brewed the poison knowing the emperor’s plan.

‘Should I kill him now?’

The one who threatens Ian the most.

Maybe this boy was the only one.

Killing him before he became a threat, was one of the only methods.

‘But, I can change him, to make him stand on my side.’

What if he uses his talents for only Ian, and not Ragnar? What if he brews artifact level elixirs which enhances the power of Ian further, instead of brewing deadly poisons?

‘I may be able to challenge the 9th class.’

The level of Dragons.

He might have a chance to reach it.

‘But.’

Humans couldn’t be controlled, without exception.

Since his father survived and he didn’t become a slave, he would grow in a different

way than in the former life.

‘They change quickly.’

The human was an animal which never trusted.
He already trusted, and it resulted in his death.
The only person Ian could trust in this life was,

‘Only my mother.’

He decided to not trust anyone except her.
The precious present that former life gave to him.
Perhaps, it was rather a curse.

“D, daddy... Don’t die... daddy...”

Douglas started to scream in his dream.
He must be having nightmares.
This nightmare, which was about him losing his father, which could have been real in the former life.

“Mr. Mage!”

The voice was coming from a distance.
It was the soldier, Luca, who was running to him while breathing roughly.
He always carried the spear with a red feather.

“What is going on?”

“I... i saw you rushing out of the village...”

Luca said while glancing at Douglas.
It was the boy who rushed out from the village before Ian did.

“That boy...”

“I chased him because he would do something reckless.”

“But what... He is sleeping, isn’t he?”

“I made him sleep.”

“Aha! That is. The sleeping magic! oh...”

Luca nodded quickly.
He seemed to be inspired by his book.

“Well as you came here, please bring him back to the village.”

“What about you?”

“I need to go somewh...”

Suddenly Ian has sharpened his eyes.

“A... anything wrong...?”

Luca was frightened by Ian’s eyes.

He started to sweat due to his fear.

“...Nothing. I’ll be back later.”

“Ah, Yes, Yes! T... then!”

Luca quickly carried Douglas on his back.

Even though he swore to himself to be brave for his book, still, he was so scared.

He moved quickly to run away from Ian.

‘It was worth it though! Sleeping magic!’

With a mixture of pleasantness and fear, Luca arrived near the village.

“Let’s do this!”

After a short shout, Ian stood up.

He went deeper into the forest.

“Yo, kid?”

It was a rough voice from a man.

“Where ya going? It’s dangerous.”

He wasn’t alone.

There were more than 10 men.

They started to encircle Ian.

“Seems you just came from Lloyd village, we want to hear a story. What happened there?”

Thieves who assaulted the village.

These guys seemed to be part of them.

“We are gentle guys, you know? If you remain a good boy, we might spare your life. Huh? What was the word... Mercy! Yeah, with mercy.

Furthermore, there were a few kids they kidnapped. It wasn't just kids from Lloyd village.

“They must have assaulted a different village.”

Heisting many villages simultaneously?

It was a risky move for the thieves.

Probably, they were going to move their den after this heist.

They tried to steal as much as they could, before they move.

“I killed them.”

Ian replied simply.

“What?”

“I ordered people to burn or bury the thieves' corpses.”

He recited the words which Eric had said before.

“What the hell is he sayi...”

“If I burn you, it will cause a bush fire. Then...”

Ian swung his hand from down to up.

“Entangle.”

Then an amazing thing happened.

*Grrr... *

They felt a weak earthquake shake underneath their feet.
A few seconds later,

Crush! crush! crush! crush!

Monstrous vines came out, rupturing the soil.

“Wh, What...!”

Vines came out from every side.
It targeted the thieves and started to entangle their bodies.
Not just that, it started to block their nose and mouth, causing them to suffocate, like
giant snakes that hunted their prey.
Cunning and quick.

“mmm... mmmph!”

Ian didn't care for the thieves' struggling.
Ian released the tied up kids.

“Where did you come from?”

“F... from Soil Village...”

“Hmm, Soil is it?”

It was a village he hadn't heard of.
There must be many tiny villages that he has never heard of.

“Head straight that way, then you will see the village.”

Ian pointed to the Lloyd village side.

“Tell them that you came from Soil village, and that things happened in your village,
and Mr. Mage removed the thieves. You got it?”

The kids nodded.
Although there were some kids who were older than Ian, nobody dared to question
him.
Because they just saw what happened to the thieves.

“Go, quickly.”

Ian sent the kids.

Now, he turned his eyes towards the thieves.

They were still struggling.

“I’ve decided to see how thing turn out. Before I kill anyone.”

The vines started to wrap around them with more strength.

Ian didn’t order the vines to do so, but the vines automatically acted itself by understanding Ian’s intention.

“Dead or alive, which one would be beneficial to me?”

Ian gathered mana on his left leg,

To cast a new magic.

“For you guys,”

smash!

Ian powerfully stomped on the ground with his left leg.

Then, the ground in front of him started to fall down

A giant hole was made.

“A dead body will be beneficial to me, won’t it?”

With Ian’s order, the vines started to move.

It stretched their roots and moved down into the hole.

Of course, together with the entangled thieves.

CHAPTER 15

THE VERY ANTITHETICAL ALCHEMIST (4)

The sun was setting, an eventful day at Llyod village was ending.
The atmosphere village became calm.

“Douglas, are you sleeping?”

Inside the shabby hut Ledio was lying on a hard wooden bed.
Although he was lying on the bed, he hadn’t fallen asleep.

“...Not yet.”

Douglas was lying on a small bed on the other side.
He couldn’t fall asleep, like his father.

“Barton told me that a mage came to our village.”

“Well, he seems similar in age to me.”

“I heard you risked your life again.”

“...I just wanted to find the flower.”

“So you risked your life. Don’t you know how dangerous the outside is?”

At his father’s rebuking, Douglas stood up.
He seemed to be upset.

“Then what should I do! The mage told me. You will be fine for just a short period.
Soon, you will suffer again!”

After he awoke from the sleeping magic, he couldn’t think about anything, except the
worry about his father, and the fear that he would be left alone.

“I’m okay. Now, we just need to find the flower of Randor...”

“Yet we haven’t found it. We’ve spent more than a year already!”

It was true.

To cure mana addiction, they moved to the northern side a year ago, to find the flower of Randor.

“Are you even sure that you can be cured with the flower?”

“Douglas...”

“Well, does it even exist?”

Ledio couldn't say anything.

He understood his son's concerns.

But he couldn't give his son a clear answer.

“It does.”

Somewhere, someone answered.

It wasn't Ledio's voice.

“...!”

They looked around their house.

The voice didn't come from inside, but outside.

“W... who is it?”

Ledio asked carefully.

With his sick body, he stepped closer to the door.

While grabbing an ax with his hand.

“The flower of Randor.”

“...?”

“I heard that you are seeking it.”

Ledio didn't reply.

He opened the door slowly.

*Screeee... *

The rusty hinges of the old door made an uncomfortable sound.

The owner of the voice was standing by the wall of the hut.

It was a young boy.

“What are you talking abo...”

“Excuse me.”

The boy came into the house smoothly.

“Who are y...?”

Then Douglas recognized the boy.

“Mmmph!”

Suddenly, as if he misspoke something, he covered his mouth.

“Douglas? Do you know this boy?

“H... He is the ma, mage I told you...”

“...What?”

That was why.

The reason Douglas covered his mouth.

He spoke without any respect unconsciously, because the mage was a similar age to him.

“So, so, sorry, Sir! I made a m... mistake...!”

“It is okay. By the way,”

After he calmed Douglas, Ian addressed Ledio.

“I am Ian Page.”

Ian put something on the closest table, while he was speaking.

It was a fist-sized ice ball.

“W... what is it?”

“You may need it.”

By his instinct, Ledio stepped closer to the stuff.

He investigated the ice closer.

“This...?”

Ledio opened his eyes wide.
With shaking hands, he picked up the sphere of ice.
He saw something which was caught in the ice.
There was a violet flower that was frozen.

“The flower... of Randor?”

Douglas was surprised as well by Ledio’s murmuring.
The flower that they had never found, even though they had searched for a year.
Did Ian bring them a flower of which even its existence was uncertain?
This mage?

“The flower, I will give it to you.”

Ledio’s eye started to shake.

“Before, I just want to ask one thing.”

Ledio was ready to answer whatever he asked.
He suffered from mana addiction for too long.
His life was ticking.
He couldn’t just die while leaving Douglas alone.

“How did you know?”

“.....Pardon?”

“Its effect wasn’t known.”

With Ian’s question, Ledio barely cooled down his head.
It wasn’t an answer that he could speak easily

“That is...”

The herb which was fatal to mages.
A mage was asking about it.
His life was at risk.

“Please don’t spend your time on meaningless thinking.”

Ian read Ledio’s mind.
He spoke quietly.

“I can find it whenever I want.”

Ian threatened Ledio indirectly, for young Douglas.
Ledio understood the intention of Ian.
What would happen if a mage decided to harm Ledio?
That would be the end of Ledio. There were no ways to prevent it, nor run away.
The answer was an important matter.

“Of course, I dare not to.”

This mage saved his life twice.
From the hands of the thief,
From his mana addiction.

“...The illustrated book.”

Ledio spoke out as he decided.

“I saw it in this illustrated book.”

Ledio walked to an old bookshelf.
Most of the books were about alchemy.
There were a few kids book as well.

Click!

Ledio didn’t pull out the book from the shelf.
Instead, He took off a cover piece of the bottom of the shelf.
There, was a hidden space.

“This one.”

Ledio pulled out a book from the hidden space.
It was a very thick and old book.

Its cover was worn out badly.

Its pages were withered to yellow, which showed how old the book was.

“It is an illustrated herb book which I inherited from my father.”

Ian opened the book.

It was filled with small letters.

It was all about the name and information of herbs.

Their effects and the region they grew.

Illustrations of them, and how to gather them.

‘Astonishing.’

Ian was impressed.

It was an essence of herbalism.

“Here, would you look at this page...”

Over there, he saw the flower of Randor section.

Because of its rarity, there was not much information about it.

[It can neutralize mana.] [Only can be found on the northern side of the continent.] [A 12 petaled with an unclear violet colour.] [Its blue leaf and stem are poisonous.] [It withers instantly whenever it is removed from the soil it grows in.] [It can't be gathered as of current knowledge.]

Even though Its written information was precise.

How, and who wrote this book?

“Was your father an alchemist too?”

“It was our family profession.”

“So this book is an heirloom.”

“Similar.”

A house which chooses alchemy as its family job.

It was a rare case.

Furthermore, the quality of the book was a surprise.

Douglas inherited such a bloodline.

Ian wanted Douglas more.

“That was the answer I wanted.”

The ice which contained the flower of Randor.
While holding it, Ian spoke.

“And.”

The ice started to thaw quickly.
Soon, only its wet soil and flower were exposed to the air.

“I am sorry.”

*Pssssss... *

The flower withered quickly as it was exposed to the air.
Precisely, it wasn't just withered, but completely dried.
Even with a small movement, its body was cracked to dust.

“I had no choice, either. I am only able to freeze it so that it keeps its shape.”

He didn't lie.
It was exactly the same as the book illustrated.
Whenever it was removed from its soil, it turns to dust.

“Did you lie to me?”

“I showed you the proof, first.”

“What kind of proof...”

“The proof that I can find the flower of Randor whenever I want to.”

The flower which can't be found by Ledio and Douglas for a year.
It took only half of a day for Ian to find it.
Thanks to his ultimate magical application and conjuring magic.

“Let's make a deal.”

“A deal...?”

Ian jumped into the main topic.

“Let’s travel with me.”

“What a sudden do you mean...”

“I will inject you with mana periodically.”

The life which was threatened by mana addiction.

It meant Ian would own Ledio’s life.

“The way of how to use the flower as a medical herb. I will find it for you as well. By searching through every record of the Royal and Ivory tower.”

There must be some kind of record about it.

As Ragnar and Douglas in his former life found it.

“ ... ”

It was a perfect condition to Ledio.

However, it was a deal.

There must be something he needed.

“What do you want to have in return?”

Ledio asked.

“Research, and brewing.”

“What sort of things?”

“Elixirs.”

“Elixirs?”

“An elixir that is focused on my body type, mana type and all other details of myself. A custom elixir that is only for me.”

The custom elixir for one man.

Ledio asked suspiciously.

“If you want, you can ask any famous other alchemist, can’t you? I am not such a great alchemist.”

“I know.”

It might sound offensive to Ledio.

However, Ian didn’t stop.

“Sometimes, the power of desperation is stronger than talent.”

“Do I look that desperate?”

“You won’t like to die while leaving your young son alone.”

Ledio couldn’t say anything.

Of course, Ian’s word hit the nail on the head.

However, what surprised him more than Ian’s word was;

‘He is not a kid.’

They weren’t words that a child was able to speak.

There was no exception for mages.

Mages that Ledio had met before,

They treated him, a mana heart-less man, as their toy.

‘They were all arrogant.’

Of course, they were far from wise.

The power which was given at young age.

It was like a loaded crossbow,

The crossbow held by a young kid.

‘But he is different. Who is he?’

Ledio felt that something isn’t natural, which caused him to hesitate.

After short thinking, Ledio said.

“Would you give... some time to think?”

“As long as you want.”

Ian respected Ledio’s thinking.

Ian took off the mask of a child.

Ledio must have felt something unnatural.

He would need some time.

‘This time, it will be different.’

Ian thought while looking at Douglas.

‘He won’t lose his father, nor become a slave.’

The boy was frozen at this sudden suggestion.

His face contained no hatred, which Douglas of his former life had.

‘Especially, I will try to save your father.’

Ledio’s life was just a tool for Ian.

Ian wanted the talent of Douglas.

‘To possess your talent.’

CHAPTER 16

THE COMING OF THE CROWN PRINCE (1)

Ian and his convoy had stayed in the village for a while.

Since the village was still recovering from the assault of the thieves, they decided to stay to relieve them.

[The Spearmaster, 'Luki' was brave. Confronting thousands of enemies, he wasn't swayed at all. He trusted the perfect support of the 6th class archmage. Then 'Dragon Spear Luganis' swung and slashed its surroundings while flagging its own red feather...]

Under a zelkova tree in the village,

Luca was writing his novel on his notebook while laying his spear with a red feather on his thigh.

"Wait, what kind of magic will that mage use? He's supposed to support. Hmm, maybe, the ice lance that Mr. Ian used? With a massive amount of them, smash, smash, smash...!"

"I can. You want me to show you?"

"Ahhhhhh!"

With the sudden voice, Luca screamed.

Ian stood right next to him.

How long had he stood here?

"...Mr. Mage?"

"I didn't mean to scare you, I am sorry."

"N... no problem. I am fine. H... ha ha..."

He was making his best smile, but he wasn't smiling inside.

Thanks to him becoming closer to Ian recently, he was able to manage himself to smile. Otherwise, he would be pissing his pants.

“Dragon Spear Luganis.”

“...yeah, yeah?”

“I can see the red feather on it. So is it...?”

Ian said while looking at Luca’s spear with a red feather.

A teasing voice and wink as a child.

‘So he read...’

He hadn’t shown his novel to others.

Well, its first reader was Mr. Mage now.

Luca felt ashamed and wanted to go hide in a hole.

‘By the way, how can he read?’

It was quite an interesting fact that Ian can read the letters.

Although he became a mage, but it happened just a month ago.

Before that, he was just a son of a kitchen maid.

He wouldn’t have had a chance to learn letters.

‘When someone becomes a mage, then does he learn letters automatically?’

It took Luca a few years to read and write letters.

Of course, he didn’t know all of them yet.

He still had to learn many words and a lot of grammar.

“Y... you can read?”

Luca questioned courageously.

What if magic allowed him to read letters?

It is going to be very useful information.

“Of course. I am a mage.”

“S... so a mage can read letters with the power of magic?”

“Of course. A Mage is the best.”

“Wow...!”

Luca took Ian’s joke seriously.

Ian laughed quietly while watching his stunned face.

‘I’ve always wondered, but now I am sure.’

Ian knew Luca.

Precisely, he knew the book Luca had written.

He never had read it but heard about it.

‘I heard about him when I just decided to leave the capital in my former life.’

In the Mogrian province, Ian was the most famous.

However, there was another man who had a lot of money and was just as famous as Ian.

‘Luca Luca’

The novelist earned a lot of money.

The novelist used the nickname ‘Luca Luca.’

Ian was sure it was him who would become a novelist.

Although he wasn’t famous yet.

“Mr. Mage, Here you are.”

Someone called Ian.

It was the veteran knight, Eric.

“We are now ready to return to the province castle.”

Ian looked at Ledio’s house.

Since the village was small, he easily found it.

‘Does he need more time?’

Ledio said to give him some time to think.

Ian thought he has given Ledio enough time.

“Ok, let’s move.”

“Then, we will depart one hour later.”

Llyod village was restored.
Same as Soil village which was assaulted as well.
The house of Macspadden doubled the number of guard soldiers.

“By the way, Luca, what are you doing here?”

After finishing the report, Eric asked Luca.

“I... I was taking a rest for a while...”
“While your comrades were preparing to return?”
“I couldn’t see anything that needed help...”
“Are there any more excuses?”
“S... sorry sir!”

Eric was a knight who was born to a non-noble family.
Thanks to that, he didn’t look down on other soldiers and he was friendly to them.
Of course, he knew his duty and respected his orders.

‘Well, he will have a hard time.’

Ian shortly felt sympathy for Luca.
Ian walked to Ledio’s house.
Did he need more time?

*Scree... *

At that moment,
The door of the hut was opened.

“Huh? Mr. Mage?”

Douglas and Ian made eye contact with each other.
Behind him, Ledio walked out.
While carrying a huge bag with him.
Not only on his back but in his hands.

“Have you decided?”

Ledio nodded.

"I have no choice. I better live longer at least."

Ledio roughly tousled Douglas' hair.

He decided to survive by any means necessary for his only son.

"Wise decision."

"Please keep the promise."

"Of course."

The enemy of his former life Ian met coincidentally, now joined his side.

It was a good start.

"Have you said goodbye to the village people?"

"I just drank shortly with the village men, only had a few. I was just a stranger who was brewing strange medicine."

Ledio's voice as bitter.

Of course, the village people acted normally.

Ledio didn't blame them as well.

"S... sir..."

Douglas came to Ian and opened his mouth.

Mages were fearful existences to people.

He acted carefully.

"Can you really... can you really cure my father?"

"I promise."

"Really?"

"Really."

"Then... You are my captain now!"

"Huh?"

Captain.

What a cute word which suits a young kid.

In his former life, this innocent kid became a man filled with anger and hate.

"Alright. Call me like that then."

“Yes! Captain!”

The conversation between young son and Ian who acted like a mature man. While Ledio listened to this weird conversation, he pulled something from his bag. It was a flask with a long lid.

“This is my contract gift.”

Ledio handed it to Ian.
Ian gently shook the flask.

“Something is in here.”

It was a flask filled with an unidentified liquid.
Would it be the elixir he had brewed?
But normally, elixir wouldn't be contained in such a flask.

“It's an alcohol.”

“Alcohol?”

“I drank it with the other men all the night, and that's the last one...”

Although Ian acted like matured man, did he just give alcohol to a kid?

“Well, I'm not saying it's real alcohol. Actually, it is alcohol, but... What should I say.”
“Alcohol that's good for your body?”

Douglas tried to help his father.
However, It wasn't a description that Ledio wanted.

“It is sort of... a half elixir.”

“Hmm, half elixir.”

“What do you mean 'half'?”

“It is good for your body but it tastes like alcohol.”

“Then it won't make me drunk?”

“It makes you drunk.”

Then isn't it alcohol?

“But its effect I guarantee. Unlike standard elixir that increases your power in the long term, It is a potion which gives immediate effect...”

Ledio added a long description.

It was the new side of Ledio which he hadn't shown to Ian before.

Maybe this was his real character.

It also proved that he decided firmly.

“Mr. Mage!”

Suddenly,

A soldier came to Ian.

“A messenger from the province castle is coming.”

A soldier pointed to the hill outside of the village.

Indeed, a man was coming while riding a horse.

With the Mogrian flag on his back.

Clip-clop! Clip-clop! Clip-clop!

The sound of hoofbeats was closing in.

Ian walked to the entrance of the village.

Other people also followed Ian.

“Woah! woah!”

The rider calmed his horse as he saw Ian.

By his appearance, He was a province soldier.

“Mr. Mage.”

“You may speak.”

“You better hurry to go back to the province castle.”

An urgent voice came from the rider.

“Is there any problem?”

“The messenger informed us that the crown prince has passed Garmath river.”

“Garmath river? Already?”

“The message arrived today’s morning.”

Not only Ian, but Eric and other soldiers started to make noise.

Garmath river is the river which is located at the beginning of the north side.

It would take only around two days to the province castle.

‘Why were they informed so late...’

In common sense, they should inform the castle ten days beforehand, via communication post. So the province had enough time to prepare to welcome the crown prince.

‘I’d better move quickly.’

There was not enough time to move altogether.

Unless every one of the convoys and Ledio family rode horses.

“Please lend me a horse.”

After Ian decided, he said to the rider.

“Do you know how to ride?”

“I don’t know riding technique, and my legs are too short.”

Ian’s body was too small so he needed a custom saddle.

Due to that, the rider asked in confusion.

“Then how do you...”

“I will befriend it shortly.”

Ian approached the horse while saying that.

While petting the horse, Ian cast a spell on it.

The magic that made him able to control a peaceful animal.

“Taming.”

Then, the horse waved its tongue to Ian.

Taming magic started to work.

“I will see you there later.”

Ian rode the horse immediately.

Being honest, he was hanging onto it as strongly as he can.

“Sir Eric, please come along with the alchemist over there.”

“Yeah? Who is he...”

“I thank you. See you there.”

After Ian asked Eric to escort Ledio and Douglas, he whispered to the horse.

“Let’s go to the province castle. Will you?”

Prrrrrrgghh!

As a reply, the horse whined.

It started to run straight to the province castle.

There was no need to pull its bridle, nor kick its stomach.

“ ... ”

Eric suddenly received Ian’s favor.

He gazed at Ledio.

Ledio didn’t avoid his eyes.

It was a totally awkward situation.

“My name is Ledio. I am an alchemist.”

Ledio tried first to get rid of this weird situation.

“My name is Eric, A knight of the Mogrian knight order.”

However, after the greeting, the awkwardness started again.

Eventually, they just looked at Ian’s backside which was getting far.

For a long time.

CHAPTER 17

THE COMING OF THE CROWN PRINCE (2)

(By any means necessary, make him your man.)

The luxury carriage embroidered with gold and jewels.
In the carriage, a young handsome man was sitting.
He had impressive platinum-colored hair.

(Use the boy as a foundation to prepare your future status.)

The crown prince of the empire, 'Hayden Greenriver'.
He recalled the request of his father.

(I'm telling you to establish a loyal team, unique to yourself.)

The request was to persuade the boy to be your side.
Although they had had a long conversation, the conclusion was simple.

"Ha!"

Hayden couldn't understand.
Although Ian was a mage, but what's special about him?
Weren't there so many mage kids in the ivory tower?

'There are so many brats I can't stand.'

It wasn't only Ian he had thought.
The five younger brothers in the palace.
In fact, Hayden didn't regard them as his siblings.

'Humph, even their mothers aren't my mother.'

The kids who would threaten his life later.
Whenever Hayden recalled them, he wanted to vomit.

‘On the day I succeed the crown,’

He would execute all other princes.
Especially the fifth prince, the cunning one.

“Haha.”

The imagination made him feel better.
After calming his mind, he looked at the scenery over the window.
The river that shone in an emerald color as one of the rivers of Greenriver.
It was the ‘Garmath river,’ which was the border of south and north.

“Your highness.”

A knight on a horse approached the carriage.
It was the second royal knight captain, Oliver Raywood.

“We should send a messenger to them right now.”
“I think we already finished that conversation.”

Captain Oliver hardened his face slightly, so as to not let the crown prince notice.

“They would need a minimum time to prepare your welcome, your highness. Please have mercy on them.”

Oliver pleaded to crown prince gently and respectfully.

“Ah, Your house is one of the northern houses, isn’t it?”
“Yes, it is.”

The house of Haywood was one of the houses that served the Mogrian house.
Oliver’s older brother was the leader of the Raywood house.

“Hmmm...”

The crown prince started to think.
He liked Oliver at least, while he doesn’t like most of the other people.
The knight who always protected him closely, without excuse.

Furthermore, he was called the greatest swords master of the empire.
As a crown prince, he should take care of a man like Oliver.

‘Not the kids who know some magic trick!’

It was the motto of the crown prince.

“How many days left to arrive there?”

“It would take approximately two days.”

“Fine. I will allow it, only because of your loyalty.”

“As you command.”

Oliver moved away from the carriage.

He commanded his squads.

Soon, two riders left the march,

To visit a communication post to send a message to the house of Mogrian.

‘Two days isn’t that bad.’

His trick was very nasty.

While looking at nobles in a hurry and panicked,

He felt an excitement whenever he watched it.

Maybe it can be expressed as Superiority.

That’s why he hadn’t even relayed his march route properly.

Furthermore, he increased the marching speed to be unexpected.

He wanted to see the northern nobles while they panicked.

‘A guardian of the north? Aegis of the empire? Bullshit.’

He didn’t like them since the moment he heard of them.

Barbarians who always were talking about the tradition of the north.

They didn’t have mages nor knights with a manaheart.

What made such barbarians feel so proud of themselves?

This time, he would break their pride.

‘And mages.’

A massive march which continued behind the carriage.

The crown prince stared at other carriages in the march.

Three carriages which were as luxurious as the crown princes.
Each carriage was carrying mages one by one.

‘One day, I will deal with those arrogant men.’

The northern territory was panicked.
From all nobles to normal people.
They moved in a hurry to prepare for the sudden visit of the crown prince.

“The crown prince will be staying here! Not a single speck of dust will be allowed.
Remember it!”

Not only that but the numberless servants and maids in the province castle as well.

“How are we going to satisfy the tongues of palace people?”

“We couldn’t start it unless the chief maid comes...”

“I can help you guys.”

“M... mrs. Page?”

“Come on. I told you not to call me like that.”

Kitchen maids, who had no idea of the taste of the royal palace, were on alert as well.

‘I assumed they would be late as there was no message.’

Of course, the man who in the most trouble,
The great landlord Marcus Mogrian shook his head.
He had enough with the Mogrian mountain event, but now, the crown prince was coming.

“Did everyone arrive?”

“Yes. Except for Macspadden and Raywood house, all other leaders and reclaimers of other houses have arrived at the province castle. Also, those two houses that haven’t arrived sent a message that they will arrive soon.”

The veteran old butler, Hrothgar answered clearly.
It removed some burdens of the great landlord.
What would happen if there are empty chairs of nobles, while the crown prince arrives?

He must rebuke them with it.
However, the biggest problem was unsolved.

“What about Mr. Mage? No message yet?”

“Yes... No message yet.”

“That’s the problem.”

Of course, he wouldn’t want to blame Ian at all.
But he was concerned about the reaction that the crown prince would show.

“Let’s move out, anyway.”

The great landlord moved toward to the main entrance,
To form a welcome line to greet the crown prince.

“I greet you, great landlord.”

Numerous leaders and reclaimers from other houses that serve Mogrian were there.
They couldn’t greet each other properly, yet.
They wouldn’t be able to have some conversation until dinner time.

“Greetings later. First, we better prepare to welcome the crown prince.”

Soon, the nobles started to move quickly.
Including the great landlord, people of the Mogrian house took the first line.
The rest of the leaders and reclaimers of the other houses took a line behind.

“Hew, what a surprise.”

The leader of the Raywood house had just arrived.
Alter Raywood spoke to the great landlord while moving into his position.
His roused hair showed how fast he had ridden the horse.

“That’s what I am saying.”

It was the great landlord who was in the biggest trouble.
There were only a few minutes left.

“The crown prince is coming!”

Finally, the shout of a soldier shook the province castle.
From afar, a massive march was coming.
Knights and soldiers with white clothes, and luxurious carriages.
Finally, the problem was coming.

“Great landlord, where is Mr. Mage...?”

Now other leaders of houses started to wonder.
The mage was the only reason that the crown prince had come.
However, where is that mage?

“He is...”

While The great landlord about to explain that the mage went out somewhere and he hadn’t turned yet,

Clip-clop! Clip-clop! Clip-clop!

The narrow shortcut on the side road of the province castle.
At the side road, which was connected to the deep northern territory, a horse was coming.
With the boy riding on it. Actually, while hanging the boy on the back.

“That...”

His riding pose was so untrained.
It couldn’t even be called a riding pose.
The rider’s pose showed no basic skills of riding.
However, the horse directed straight to the destination.

“Stop.”

Purrrh!

With a short word, the horse decreased its speed as if it understood the word.
Would it even possible?
No such clever horse existed.
Nobles spent many hours with their horses.

In their common sense, it was impossible.

“Sorry. I am a bit late.”

“All good. It’s a relief you just arrived in time. Please, come here.”

The great landlord indicated Ian’s position by himself.

He was so desperately hurried to do so.

“Mr. Mage is the man who received a royal order, you must stand at the very front of the line, which is the manner of the empire.”

Every noble who was listening to the conversation was astonished.

Although they had expected it, but they couldn’t believe their eyes when they saw him for real.

“That boy is... a mage?”

The boy who arrived with weird riding skill.

He was the guest of the north, Mage Ian Page.

CHAPTER 18

THE COMING OF THE CROWN PRINCE (3)

“So, is that you?”

It was the first sentence of the crown prince when he saw Ian, standing in front of the province castle and that was the end of his words.

Intended and blatant ignorance of Ian.

It seemed he didn't really care about what the emperor asked of him before.

Of course, Ian didn't care about that, either.

‘He acted exactly the same as in my former life.’

He hadn't inherited the talent of a king like his father, nor the wisdom from his mother.

Literally, he was an inferior man. Ian expected nothing from him.

If there was no love of the emperor, he should have been kicked out a while ago.

‘Who I really care about is,’

Instead of the emperor, Ian paid attention to another person.

The three mages who came along with the emperor.

Between them, he focused on the mage, who was the only female among them.

‘Cecilia.’

Ian was able to recall her clearly.

Of course, the other two mages he also remembered.

However, Cecilia was a special case.

‘She was a spy from the Coldwood Empire.’

In his former life, this truth was revealed a long time later.

A very rare case where a mage was revealed as a spy.

It shocked the whole empire at that time.

‘I expected they would try to contact me, but.’

From the Coldwood empire, or the Republic of Lo.

He expected they would try to contact him.

However, they sent not other spies, but her?

‘In an emergency, are they trying to suppress me with her magic?’

Coincidentally, Cecilia looked at Ian.

With an attractive and fresh smile.

Ian also didn’t avoid her eyes,

He replied to her gaze with an innocent child’s face.

It would be a long night.

Late at night, at the dinner hall of the province castle.

A huge dinner party was held to welcome the crown prince.

Considering they only had two days, it was quite a satisfying party.

Forgetting about each sides’ standing in public, but welcoming the guest.

It was an old traditional manner of north nobles.

The tradition the crown prince had looked down upon with hatred.

However, the crown prince didn’t deny the party.

“Haha! I never knew that North wine was so good!”

Instead, he enjoyed the party.

He loved alcohol more than any others.

Actually, It was more like tenacity, more than love.

The magic potion which lets him forget everything.

‘The crown prince has no solid standard at all.’

A lady looked at the empire in the crowds.

The lady, Cecilia clicked her tongue.

‘Well, It’s good for us, though.’

She was the spy of Coldwood empire.

Foolish crown prince? Nothing bad for her country.

Even the emperor, who was called as good and wise, always tried to cover for him.

It was clear evidence that the future of Greenriver was doubtful.

‘Where is the boy... ’

She didn’t need to spy on the foolish crown prince forever.

Today, her only target was Ian.

Cecilia’s eyes were searching for Ian.

He didn’t show up at the dinner hall.

Of course, he was a kid.

‘I’ll find him eventually, there’s no hurry.’

Cecilia left the dinner hall quietly.

The first order from her country was simple.

Joining the march of the crown prince, which headed to the northern territory.

‘Well, I accomplished that at least.’

It wasn’t that hard.

She was a 3rd class mage who would have some power in the ivory tower.

If she wanted, she could’ve come easily.

‘Is it really true?’

The report about Ian from the conducting mage.

A few rumors about him which came from the northern territory.

She reported everything to her country that she heard.

However, whenever she sent the report, she doubted it.

Taught himself how to manage mana?

Casting magic that he was never taught?

Just like the first mage of the same legend?

Her country also had the same suspicion.

'I still can't believe it.'

A few days ago, the second mission was ordered.

'Figure out whether the rumors are true or not.'

It meant that she had to check it in person.

What if the rumor was just an exaggerated story?

She could just make simple excuse,

As a mage and a senior of the Ivory tower, she challenged him with her curiosity.

The tower lord also ordered her to pay attention to Ian anyway.

But if the rumors were truthful, then everything would change suddenly.

'Kidnap him and his mother alive, then return straight to the Coldwood empire.'

The chance would decrease later.

It must be now, while he was staying in the northern territory, the mission must be accomplished.

So, while everyone was not paying attention due to the dinner party, today was the perfect day.

'But kidnapping is quite an odd mission.'

Try to bring him alive by any means necessary.

We will try to convince him after that.

But if it turns ugly, he better be killed.

We can't let other countries grab such a dangerous weapon.

The order clearly showed the will of the Coldwood empire.

'He is not in the bedroom.'

His mother was helping kitchen maids, which was very unusual.

Rumor said his mother was a kitchen maid, and it seemed to be true.

'As I heard, he usually stays in the gymnasium, doesn't he?'

That's what the servants of the castle said.

The 1st gymnasium which is the biggest area of province gymnasiums.

They said he always stood in the center of it.

Some said they saw some great magics.

Being honest, she thought it must be exaggerated.

'Rumors are always getting bigger and bigger like a snowball.'

Hundreds of goblins? It must be about a hundred goblins.

Still, it would be a great talent.

Great enough talent that provides her good enough reason to kidnap him.

'Is he here?'

Cecilia arrived near the first gymnasium.

She looked inside sneaky.

With magic, she erased her trails as well.

'There he is,'

As expected, Ian was there.

Exactly the same as the servants described.

He stood at the center quietly.

He didn't move at all.

'Let's start with,'

The testing time had come.

'Warm-up level.'

Above the head of Cecilia, a few blue spheres appeared.

Un-elemental, A pure chunk of mana.

It was the beginner level magic which power was about the same as a light punch.

'Magic missile.'

The three spheres were flying to Ian.

If the rumors were true, he shouldn't simply be defeated by a magic missile.

Even It was just a rumor, it wouldn't harm him that much.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A dull noise.

It was different to Cecilia's expectation.

It wasn't the sound of beating flesh.

'Shield?'

So it was.

The semi-transparent shield was covering around the boy.

It was the source of dull noises.

'How?'

Reacting with a shield with this sudden assault.

Did he expect it?

It can't be.

'So It's not just a rumor huh?'

Cecelia revealed herself in front of Ian.

There is no meaning in hiding.

“Who’s there?”

In the boy’s voice, there was no emotion.

The emotion which he was supposed to feel in this sudden situation.

Embarrassment, Curiosity, Fear, etc.

This was strange, and suspicious.

“Didn’t you see the magic? I am your great, great Ivory tower senior.”

Cecelia replied without swaying.

She put on a smile.

She wanted to have a conversation with him.

“What are you doing?”

“Can’t mages greet each other?”

“Do you call this rudeness a greeting?”

“Huh? Look at what this young boy says.”

While making some funny gesture, Cecelia approached.

She wanted to check Ian’s face closer.

“Come on, A Senior should be able to do some small tricks on a newbie, don’t be harsh.”

As she expected,

Ian wasn’t embarrassed at all.

“Should you really make that serious face? You make me embarrass...”

“Stop. Cecelia.”

Cecelia stopped suddenly.

Did she tell her name to the boy?

No, she never did.

“Cecelia Coldwalker.”

“.....What?”

Coldwalker.

Children who were born to be trained as Coldwood spies.

The children who survived from the last training and started the mission.

It was a secret surname which was only given to such children.

Even in her country, only a few knew about the existence of Coldwalker.

But then.

“Just who... are you?”

CHAPTER 19

THE COMING OF THE CROWN PRINCE (4)

“Who... are you?”

Fully alert, Cecelia asked him.

Hiding emotions was the most basic of the basics for a Coldwalker.

However, at this moment, she couldn't hide her emotions.

“That name. How do you...?”

“I know it very well.”

Of course, he knew.

The man who caught the tail of the Coldwalkers in the empire,

The man who almost destroyed the entire operation.

That man was Ian in his former life.

“If you want, I can list your agents, what kind of operations you guys are running at the moment.”

“Bull shi...”

“Yol, The horse keeper of the house of Molten. Robin, Royal secretary.”

Suddenly, Ian started to recite some names and their operations.

“Aerio, The 9th border defense force soldier. Isabel, the chief maid of the detached royal palace. Ah, she shouldn't have become a chief, yet.”

Coldwalkers that Ian found in former life and still remembered.

He called specific names of Coldwalkers who may be on their mission at this moment.

“The common thing between these people, Can you have a guess? I think I know the answer.”

He listed their names and operation barely.

“What on earth...”

Cecelia completely lost her emotional balance like a ship wrecked by a storm.
The confusion exceeded her mental capacity.

“Don’t worry, though. I am the only one who knows this, yet.”

To Cecelia, Ian said this full of confidence.

“And I don’t want to tell others about it.”

“What do you mean?”

“You guys are, hmm what should I say...”

Ian paused shortly to find a good expression.

“Emergency food.”

“...?”

“I am going to arrest them one by one whenever I need to.”

Coldwalkers who were undercover in the empire, or who will come into the empire.

To Ian, they were just one of the tools to increase his merit.

The merits that he could use whenever he needed.

This era was still unstable and war could occupy the country at any moment.

Arresting a spy during the war. Such exceptional merit.

The analogy of emergency food quite suited them.

‘Just who is he?’

Cecelia chewed her lips.

What a mysterious man he is.

The man who knew the list of Coldwalkers clearly.

Furthermore, The man who was most likely the enemy of her country.

She couldn’t calm herself down.

Nevertheless, she must do something.

The situation didn’t allow her to communicate with her home country.

She must do something herself.

‘I must decide.’

As her country ordered to her, this boy must be suppressed alive.
The order was an order, and the boy was such a threat.
Right after she finishes this situation, she would send an emergency message to her country straight away.
To inform that there is a high chance that the identity of all Coldwalkers was compromised.
Fortunately, this area was connected to the border.
There was a chance to sneak out.

‘If things go ugly,’

In that case, he must be assassinated.
The primary mission objective was kidnapping, the secondary was murder.
She had no time for testing. She had to do her best.

“I have no clue how you know the names,”

Around Cecelia, fire spheres lit up.
Six spheres as big as a human’s head.
It must be much more destructive than magic missile.

“But you shouldn’t speak it out, Young boy.”

Just after she finished her word, fire spheres flew to Ian quickly.
All six spheres were targeting Ian’s body.
With a shield magic like he just cast before, he wouldn’t able to protect himself from it.

“Mana Barrier.”

However, Ian’s response was simple and amazing.
Mana Barrier, It was the next level of Shield magic.
Its wall could absorb much more damage than shield magic.

‘Did he just used a Mana Barrier?’

Her reaction was natural.
Mana Barrier was 3rd class magic.
Which means that kid’s magical skill level was the same as hers, at least.

The report of the conducted mage wasn't a rumor, indeed. Actually, it seemed he was underestimated.

BAANG! BAANG! BAAAAANG!

Fire spheres ruthlessly smashed Ian's mana barrier. The giant explosion noise was echoed in the gymnasium. Since the area was quiet, the noise was sounded louder than usual. People might come to check the gymnasium. By any means necessary, she must finish her job quickly.

'I need to find a way to draw him out from the barrier first... '

Cecelia was caught in a hurry. Time was on that boy's side.

'I guess she is in big trouble.'

The duel of magicians, it was usually quite boring. People might expect some kind of spectacular magical shows. However, the reality was different. In most cases, they just hide in their defense magic like a turtle and wait for their perfect chance. They wouldn't dare to risk their own life for the stupid magical show. The one who stays focused longer in those boring situations is the winner in most cases.

'Of course, it was the strategy for 'ordinary' magicians.'

However, Ian in his former life was different. With his overwhelming destructive magic, he destroyed a mage and barrier at the same time. In a former life, though.

'I can't do it for now.'

He didn't have enough mana to cast such a high-class magic. For now, Ian also needed to find a different method.

'I can't just stay like this.'

Cecelia was also a 3rd class magician.
She would also be able to cast mana barrier.
Fortunately, Ian had a plan.
In proper expression,

‘I made a plan.’

When he had seen Cecelia in front of the province castle,
he already had expected her to approach him to spy, and that she might be aggressive.
So, he prepared something,
On the sky of the gymnasium, covered by shadow.

“Light.”

Ian made a small light sphere.
It was a harmless convenient magic that is usually cast to provide a clear vision in a dark area.

‘Why did he use light magic?’

Cecelia couldn’t understand Ian’s choice.
Ian and Cecelia both were risking their own life.
In this breathtaking situation, did he just use the light magic?

“I knew you are Coldwalker.”

Ian lifted the light sphere to the sky.
high, higher, higher and higher.

“Even when I knew it, I decided to stay here alone. Can you guess why?”

The light magic drove the shadow from the gymnasium.
Suddenly, Cecelia’s face turned pale.
Numerous ice shards were floating in the sky.
Their sharp sides were heading to Cecelia.

“I also expected you would come to the gymnasium.”

Ian prepared to greet Cecelia with his masterpiece; the giant trap of gymnasium.

“Ice spear.”

As for raining, Ice shards started to fall down.

Unlike normal rain, it didn’t fall randomly.

Every single shard had one destination.

The destination was Cecelia.

“Urgh...!”

Cecelia quickly cast mana barrier.

Numerous ice shards fell onto her mana barrier.

Clink! Crash! Clink! Craaasshhh!

It sounded like smashing an aegis with metal.

Now the tide turned into Ian’s favor.

Crack! Craaack! Craaaaccck!

Cecilia’s barrier started to crack.

Even mana barrier had its limitations.

But, she might able to recast mana barrier, though.

A mage like Cecelia was surely able to recast it easily.

But, Ian’s Ice shards were not his final blow.

“Hew...”

Ian gathered his palms.

And he started to draw mana between his palms.

Rush!

He made a fire sphere. Just one sphere.

However, its size was unimaginably enormous.

As a snowball rolling on the snow field grew itself,

The fire sphere kept getting bigger.

“Stay right there.”

The numerous ice shards Ian made on the ceiling of the gymnasium, they were just a faint.

He used ice shards to force Cecelia to cast a barrier, so that she wouldn't be able to move.

All the steps were planned for this giant final blow.

“Pyro Blast.”

The giant fire sphere left Ian's hand.

CHAPTER 20

THE COMING OF THE CROWN PRINCE (5)

*Rooaaarr... *

The fire sphere moved through the floor of the gymnasium.
Cecelia knew the spell very well.
Due to its slow flight speed it normally isn't used for duels.
Instead, its power was extreme.
She had to jump away to avoid it.

'If I don't, I will die.'

The problem was the barrier that she was casting to protect her from the ice shards.
While casting the barrier, she couldn't move.
She had two choices.
Choose to die, or risk her body for a small chance of survival.
Cecelia chose, of course, the second choice.
She didn't want to die like this.

"Cancel."

The barrier that was nearly wrecked collapsed.
As she became free to move, she used her legs to jump as far as she could to avoid the area of effect of the fire sphere.

Pkkkkht! Pkht! Pkkht!

The ice shards stabbed her mercilessly.
It penetrated her defenseless exposed body.

Argh...!

She couldn't help screaming.
From shoulder, side body, arm and thigh.

Not just the feeling of being stabbed, but the feeling of being penetrated struck her whole body.

It was an extreme pain that a normal person wouldn't be able to bear.

'I survived.'

Nevertheless, Cecelia was sure that she made it.

Ice shards didn't stab her vital points.

She avoided the area of effect of the fire sphere.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

The noise of an enormous explosion shook the whole province castle.

The fire sphere which Cecelia avoided had destroyed the outer wall of the province castle.

"Mana Barrier...!"

Cecelia rolled on the floor.

Then she re-cast the mana barrier.

Now Ice shards in the sky no longer threatened her.

"Pant! Pant! Pant..."

Her wounded body spewed out blood.

It covered the whole floor where she laid.

But everything was fine for her. People would come soon.

They would heal Cecelia.

'There is no proof.'

She was satisfied that she survived.

There was no proof. The proof of her real identity. She had no idea how that kid knew everything, but she bet that he had no proof. She was so sure about it. She always acted thoroughly. She didn't leave any trails.

'And people would be more likely to believe me.'

She was a 3rd class mage of the ivory tower.
She sneaked into the tower and pretended to be devoted to them for 11 years.
She wouldn't be suspected by the boy's proofless claim.

'After I recover from my wounds, then later I will... '

While Cecelia was making her plan for the future,

"Hew!"

Ian came closer to her and sat down.
There was an empty bottle where he had stood.

'It was indeed, half elixir.'

The half elixir that Ledio gave to him as a gift.
Ledio said it would work as soon as he drank it, so Ian had drank it before confronting Cecelia. The result was satisfying. Cecelia was defeated and laid on the floor with a bloody body.

'There would be some side effect, though.'

His mana was still beating strongly.

"I would take some credit this time."

After Ian managed to calm down his heart, he spoke quietly.

"By arresting you."

"Haha, can you?"

"Of course."

"Where is the proof? I am quite sure there is nothing I left behind."

"You are right. The previous time, you didn't leave any clues."

"Previous time?"

"You won't understand."

Previous time? Was he bluffing?

Cecelia was caught in an unspeakable fear.

“The proof even you guys, Coldwalkers, don’t know.”

“Are you kidding me...!”

“Calm down. You will see it soon.”

Later on the situation went as they both expected.

“What happened...”

“The wall, what...?”

Many crowds who were enjoying the party gathered. They were shocked twice. Once by the shattered wall of the province castle, and another time by the bleeding Cecelia.

“Cecelia?”

The other two mages who had come with her ran urgently.

With a single look, she had severe wounds.

“What happened? This wound... by magic?”

Suddenly two mages looked at each other.

There were five mages in the Mogrian province.

Including those two mages with Cecelia, and the conducted mage, Marco.

And Marco was absent for tower lord’s mission.

That meant...

“I did.”

Everyone’s eye focused on Ian.

The boy admitted that he destroyed the wall, and wounded Cecelia.

There was a short silence.

“Tell us the details.”

The heavy low voice ended the silence.

The owner of voice was the second royal knight captain, Oliver Raywood.

“What happened here?”

“Coincidentally, I saw something that the lady over there...”

Ian paused and looked at Cecelia.
Cecelia made a curious face.
What kind of nonsense was he about to say?

“She was talking to a masked man.”
“Huh?”

By Ian’s word, Cecelia sneered.
So he chose to speak a lie.
There was no proof nor witness. There was no support.
It made her sneer.

“Go on.”
“Whenever she saw me, she tried to kill me.”
“So you wounded her like that?”
“Otherwise, I would have died.”

It was a story that he couldn’t believe.
Cecelia was the official 3rd class mage of Ivory tower.
And did this boy beat her?
He heard enough about the rumors of Ian.
In the royal palace, and northern territory. Everyone was talking about Ian.
He was a genius like the First Mage.
He cast magics without learning.
He rescued the great landlord, and guaranteed as a Eternal Guest for the northern territory.
But still, he couldn’t simply believe it.

“Can you prove it?”

The story that even captain Oliver couldn’t believe.
He questioned as formalities, rather than he sincerely believed the story.

“It seemed they were trying to check something.”
“Check?”
“Some kind of sign on their body...”

As Ian paused intentionally,

“Check her.”

Captain Oliver ordered straightly.
He ordered to check not a just normal person, but Cecelia.

“Hey captain! Enough insulting!”
“Did you forget we are the mages of the Ivory tower?”

Of course, the mages of the Ivory tower complained. Most of the knights would not dare to go against two 3rd class mages. However, Oliver Raywood was different.

Sururung!

Rather, he drew his sword and pointed it at the mages.
Other knights would not dare to act like that.

“Y, You dare...!”
“DARE?”

The old mage’s word upset the captain Oliver.
He spoke to them anxiously.

“Our highness is here. And such a threatening situation just happened here. And one of the mages of the Ivory tower is included, so it is my duty to find out what happened here exactly. And you said ‘dare? DID YOU JUST SAY DARE?’”
“T, that is...”

These mages couldn’t reply at all.
Although they were mages in high rank, they were lower than royal blood.
Regardless what they think inside, It was the rule and order of the empire.

“Then let us heal her first...”
“Do it later after we finish our job here.”

Oliver reordered.
Considering Cecelia’s gender, he ordered maids to search her body.

‘Here I met this scary guy again.’

While looking at face of the captain, Ian recalled his former life.

The sword master of the empire, actually, 'the sword master of the continent', Oliver Raywood.

The loyal knight who served the crown prince until the last.

'He was killed by mages of Ragnar.'

At the final battle to protect the crown prince, it was him against the current tower lord and his mages, and he killed five men. And all of them were higher than 2nd class mages.

'In history, he was just recorded as a traitor, though.'

The man who reached to the top of top as a knight.

At least, Ian remembered him as it.

He must already have achieved a very high level as a swordsman.

Even mages couldn't dare to go against him easily.

"Did you find anything?"

The captain asked the maids.

"S, sorry sir. we couldn't find out anything."

"Are you sure about that?"

"We checked her several times, but..."

There were no signs, nothing.

Then the two mages raised their angry voices.

"What did I just tell you! Did you really suspect one of us?"

"We better start to heal her! Right now!"

However, Oliver didn't listen.

He just looked at Ian and asked again.

"Did you lie?"

"No, sir."

After Ian shortly replied, he approached to Cecelia.

While people were wondering his action,

“Yikes!”

“W, what...”

Ian’s action stunned everyone in there.

Men turned their head away, and women didn’t know what to do.

Not just the maids but the great landlord’s wife and even Margaret.

Furthermore, even Vanessa, who just came from the dinner hall, was also embarrassed.

“Here.”

Ian didn’t stop.

Rather, he pulled Cecelia’s top cloth, around her neck, even stronger.

Her breasts were revealed.

“I don’t know what you are saying.”

There was only one.

Oliver looked at it firmly.

He seemed to feel no emotion about it.

“Keep looking at it.”

Now Ian moved his hand to Cecelia’s body.

This time, Cecelia was also embarrassed.

“Wh, what the hell are you doin...!”

She was so sure there were no sign.

It was not others, it was her own body.

If there were some kind of signs, she should have known.

At that moment,

“Around here...”

A small amount of mana was injected to Cecelia’s upper body.

Precisely, the mana disappeared after it hung around on her skin.

Then suddenly a sign appeared.
On the upper side of Cecelia's right breast, where the mana had swept away, something was revealed.
A mysterious pattern that lighted as blue.
People had no idea what that pattern meant.
However, they knew what kind of phenomenon it was.

"Mana... inscription?"

It was Cecelia who was shocked mostly.
When was the mana inscription tattooed on her body?
The tattoo which meant Coldwalkers.

'I can't believe it.'

She had no such memory.
She never tattooed a mana inscription.
When? Where? How?

"What... did you do?"

While losing her consciousness, she leered at Ian.
He must have used some kind of dirty trick.
Otherwise how can it be explained?

"I saw she was doing something with her hand. it seemed she was controlling mana."

Ian started his lie without any hesitation.
The lie Cecelia sneered at, now it became trustworthy.

'Of course she didn't know.'

Coldwalkers had grown up in a special facility.
This tattoo was some kind of 'stigma' which were tattooed in there.
A stigma which helped managers to manage their young spies.
It happened when she was young, so it was natural that she didn't remember.

'And I heard it from one of the managers.'

The manager was quite stubborn.

He was the high rank manager of the Coldwalkers. It took a lot of effort to capture him alive.

He endured painful torture for a year.

Eventually, he talked about it out, though.

“Do you have any idea of what this pattern is?”

Oliver asked to other mages.

As if the cat got their tongue, they just shook their head.

“What about you, Mr. Page?”

Ian shook his head, too.

He would better pretend to know nothing more.

“Hmm.”

Oliver was caught deep in thought.

He didn't know the meaning of the stigma.

However, Ian's words got some support now.

The situation lead Ian's word to be trusted.

It must be inspected in bigger scale.

“Heal her first. I will interrogate her later.”

Oliver ordered to his soldiers.

He looked at the two mages, and said.

“Please prepare a Mana Prison for her.”

“Khmmmm...!”

Mana Prison was the special magical circle of mages.

A magical circle was an anti magic area that interrupted the flow of mana.

It was necessary to arrest a mage.

“Captain.”

The vice captain came to Oliver after he finished his order.

“What is it?”

“Why don’t you order to search near the area?”

“You mean we better need to seek the masked man?”

“Yes so...”

“It’s a waste of time.”

“Huh?”

Oliver rejected the suggestion of the vice captain.

“We should not thin our power for meaningless searching. Rather, we should focus our manpower to protect our highness.

“Uhm...”

“Don’t forget. The reason why we came to the northern territory.”

It was a completely crown prince-centered decision.

And it was a wise decision as his bodyguard.

The vice captain agreed with his point, and he stepped back.

Click

Oliver said to Ian after he sheathed his sword.

“If everything that happened today is true, I will report it to the highness clearly.”

It was an indirect expression that Ian would receive the reward.

That’s what Ian wanted.

According to the current emperor’s characteristic, he would ask Ian in a straight-forward manner what did Ian want.

If it made sense, he would accept Ian’s request.

In such a situation, Ian had some requests in his mind.

‘Very many requests.’

CHAPTER 21

THE BOOK OF DRAGON CHANTS (1)

As it became deeper in the night, the dinner party had ended and there was only silence left. No more party, no more wine, no more laughing sounds left in there.

‘Extraordinary, indeed.’

In the province castle, inside the bedroom of the crown prince.

The crown prince was recalling the former event while drinking northern territory wine. He had thought about it over and over, and the more he thought, the more interested he was.

‘How can that young boy be so powerful?’

Was he interested in the spy mage?

No, he never cared about it.

But the fact that he won the duel against Cecelia.

That only drew the crown prince’s attention.

‘I thought his talent was exaggerated.’

The crown prince also knew the meaning of being 3rd class.

He heard that most mages wouldn’t be able to master 2nd class.

However, one of them lost to the boy called Ian.

The crown prince desired him.

‘The captain on my right side, The boy on my left side...’

Oliver, who already reached the master level of swordsman.

Ian, who contained unfathomable potential in him.

What if the crown prince managed to make them loyal to him?

Wouldn’t everyone crawl under his feet?

Including those pesky princes in the separated palace, even those arrogant mages of the ivory tower.

‘But how?’

He never moved or touched someone’s heart in his life.
He never knew how to manage people.

‘That’s right! Like my father.’

He saw father’s way many times.
Father used to reward them for their merits.
It wouldn’t be that hard.
There was nothing hard about it, was there?

“Captain.”

“How can I help you.”

“The boy, bring him here.”

Oliver understood the intention of the crown prince.
He ordered other soldiers to bring Ian.

“I heard you were looking for me, your highness.”

“Oh, you came. Welcome.”

The crown prince welcomed Ian with a hypocritical smile.
It was a very opposite attitude compared to the first time he met Ian.
He changed his attitude dramatically.
It seemed he didn’t feel any shame about it.
“The reason I called you was... Yes, I am moved by your valor. Wasn’t the spy one of the high mages? But you succeeded in arresting her alive, you made huge merit.”
“Thank you, my lord.”

The crown prince continued his words with more confidence.
It seemed he thought about himself that he was playing the role of a powerful king very well.

“So. I want to reward you specially. Is there any rewards you want to receive? Money, gold or land, whatever you name, I will listen and reward you.”

Ian barely stopped himself from sneering.

Was he following his father?
He was mimicking him very poorly.

‘Well, I don’t have anything to ask him for though.’

It was true.
There was nothing to ask the crown prince for.
Maybe the current emperor or tower lord may fulfill his request though.
This prince would only be able to give him money.

‘Well actually, I can ask for something.’

Suddenly, Ian thought about a proper request.
Ian wasn’t sure whether the crown prince would allow it, but it was worth it to try.

“Then...”
“You may speak.”
“If you allow me to do so, I want to visit the ruins of the old ivory tower before going to the royal palace.”
“The ruins of the old ivory tower?”

The ruins of the old ivory tower.
It was the ruins where the ivory tower used to be located one hundred years before.
Unlike the current new ivory tower, it was located very far away from the royal palace.

It was such an easy and small request for the crown prince.
The request he couldn’t understand.
He expected Ian to request something about money or properties.
But what he wanted was visiting the worthless ruin.
As he expected Ian was an innocent kid.
Unlike other princes who were young but still who wanted the throne.

‘Well that is an easy request.’

It wasn’t on the route to the palace.
However, it wasn’t that far from the original route though.

“If that’s what you want, I will accept.”

By his order, Ian laughed in his mind.
It seemed he would be able to get the thing earlier than he thought.
The item which was hidden underground of the ruin of the old ivory tower.

‘The book of dragon chants.’

The ancient book that Ian found only a few years before Ian died in his former life.
The book that was very essential to researching the time warping magic.
Even Ian couldn’t understand all of it, but he could understand only a little of its dragon language.
The single book that recorded its essence.

‘How many parts would I understand this time?’

It was natural curiosity as a mage.
Ian felt his heart was beating.

The tallest tower that was the closest to the sky of Greenriver.
The ivory tower, centre of magic, treasure house of information.
In there, everyone was alerted.
Every single mage enrolled in there received the test for the mana inscription.
Not only the students of the academy, but also the mages of the ivory tower.
It was a massive scaled test due to the event at the northern territory.

“There was nothing that was revealed clearly. We don’t even know the meaning of the inscription, do we? Furthermore, the man with mask hadn’t been arrested. So the only information we have is the young witness.

Including Habert, Archmages of the ivory tower were there.
They urgently gathered in their council to discuss two serious topics.

“On the other hand, she devoted herself to the ivory tower and empire for a long time. She may be accused unjustly, or trapped. Furthermore, the crown prince was there, wasn’t he? You know how he dislikes the ivory tower.”

The most urgent was, of course, Cecelia.
At the ivory tower, one of them was suspected as spy of another country, or hostile group. Furthermore, the spy was a 3rd class mage. In a worst case scenario, the trust in the ivory tower would fall off to the ground.

“Hence, until the moment we investigate the issue with our very hand, the ivory tower will ignore all the suspicion for Cecelia. It is an order as tower lord.”

That was a typical reaction from the ivory tower.

It was the group that was always biased to their members.

The group which was united with proud and band of mages.

They were strong, but few.

So they had to gather tight as much as they could.

There were always traps and attacks on them who held such strong power.

To be safe from numerous attacks, In addition, to overwhelm others underneath their feet. It was the identity of the ivory tower.

“And, the witness of this event, who you may have heard about already.”

Suddenly, mages opened their eyes wide.

Even for them, Ian was an interesting and mysterious man.

“How do we define his status.”

Maybe, the existence of Ian would be more than just an interesting topic to some mages.

Ian was such a hot topic in the ivory tower at the moment.

“According to the information we have collected, the magical level of this boy would be at least master of 2nd class, maybe more than that.”

At Habert’s claim, everyone was started to make noise.

Since they had heard rumors, they had expected it.

However, the official confirmation of the tower lord contained different levels of reliance compare to the individual expectation.

The level of Ian’s skill wasn’t the only problem.

The fact that he was able to control the magic he never learnt was the biggest problem.

“Hence, the ivory tower will operate a higher quality investigation.”

The investigation, to reveal everything about Ian.

The power of arch mages will be needed.

“Figure that out; did he really never learn magics from others, was he really raised as a normal kid, what sort of environment he used to be raised in, who are his parents. With all of the power of the ivory tower, we will find out everything. So, we require your help.”

As they agreed, everyone nodded.

If there is anything suspicious, they need to find out everything.

They already had an example of Cecelia.

“However, if there were no problems after the investigation, which means if all the suspicions on Ian Page were revealed to be incorrect...”

“Then we must admit it.”

If it revealed he was truly born a genius, they would have to admit that the boy Ian had unfathomable talent.

He was a genius whose talent can be compared to ‘The First Mage’.

“So that we can make our future plan. The plan to grow the kid, the second ‘The First Mage’, as our ally, and as a loyal tool for the ivory tower.”

The tower lord only mentioned the ivory tower, not the empire.

He didn’t call Ian a member of the ivory tower, but he called him a loyal tool.

None of these mentions were misspoken by the tower lord.

“We wouldn’t be able to control him by simply just giving him a present and doing him a favor. We need to build our own way, the only way that the ivory tower can do.”

The mages who were attending the council nodded.

Fortunately, Ian was still young.

Although he had power, he shouldn’t have matured yet.

To the ivory tower, they thought that is their advantage.

“We will be able to control such a young boy easily, won’t we?”

CHAPTER 22

THE BOOK OF DRAGON CHANTS (2)

*Clip-clop, Clip-clop, Clip-clop... *

The sky through the window of a carriage was clear indeed.
Synchronizing to the horses' stepping sound, night insects sang their songs.
22 days had passed since he had said goodbye to the Mogrian province.
He made many good memories in his hometown.
He also met numerous people in the Mogrian castle, the veteran knight Eric, the novel writing soldier, Luca.
It was definitely different from his former life.

'Most of all.'

Ian looked at his mother.
It would be her first time to travel outside in her life.
With curiosity, she enjoyed the outside view of the carriage.
The precious result, which he never had in his former life.

'I have new people on my side.'

Next to her, the alchemist Ledio was seated.
His son, Douglas, was next to him.
In his former life they were the man who had died and the boy who would become his enemy later.
They were heading to the royal palace while all riding the huge carriage together.
Thanks to that, Ian became more friendly to them.

'Not bad.'

But how long would this peace stay?
He didn't know when it would end, but he knew one thing.
Peace was the thing which should be redeemed by himself.
Whether forcing it from the outside or from the inside,

He needed the power to control his surroundings.

“Dear me! How did I forget that?”

Vanessa’s voice drew Ian from his deep thinking.

“What’s wrong, Mrs.?”

Ledio asked first before Ian asked.

Recently, he talked to her often.

Actually, they became quite close to each other.

‘Huh? Look at this man.’

Ian realized they both were around a similar age.

Of course, Ledio might be older than her by 4 or 5 years.

Was Ian reacting sensitively?

“The Lady gave me a letter, she asked me to read it while I’m traveling...”

Vanessa pulled out a letter from her bag.

It must be the letter from the daughter of the great landlord, Margaret.

“I don’t know how to read... Ian, would you?”

Just the moment Ian was about to receive the letter,

“I will read it for you, I can read the words.”

“Would you, then?”

“Haha, no problem at all.”

Ledio’s health had been restored recently.

Not only his characteristics, but his appearance was getting rejuvenated.

His white hair was quite suited for his face.

But.

“Ok, let’s see... huh?”

Ian blew away the letter from his hand.

It gently fell into his hand.

"It may have been blown away by the wind."

Ian quickly made a nonsense excuse.

What were they going to do when the mage said his words were true?

Regardless of how Ledio saw him or how his mother saw him or even how Douglas saw him,

Ian briefly read the letter with his eyes.

"Hmm."

"Why? What is it about?"

It didn't contain anything important. It wasn't filled with hateful words, either.

There were some parts that concerned Ian, but he decided to read only the part related to his mom out loud.

"She said that she was very sorry."

"Sorry? Sorry for what?"

"Sorry that she rebuked you when you were working as a kitchen maid. Ignoring you when you visited the province castle with me. Everything she did wrong to you."

Ian never lied. She listed everything in detail.

Although Ian summarized it in a few sentences, in the original letter, Margaret described it in close detail. Her memorizing skill was surprising.

'Honestly, I would call it a talent.'

Even Ian wouldn't be able to memorize such stories between other people. Unlike her appearance, she had good memorization skills.

'Or maybe she just remembered her naughty teases.'

It seemed that's another good guess about her.

Whatever, she seemed to have mellowed and realized her bad attitude, so all is good.

Ian didn't know when he would meet her next, but she will have changed a lot.

Different from her current status, and from her former life.

"Well, she didn't need to feel sorry for that. Was there anything else written?"

"That's all. She wished you good luck too."

“Really? Is that all?”

“Yes.”

Vanessa looked at Ian suspiciously.

At that moment, the carriage slowed down and stopped.

It seemed they had arrived at the palace.

“Mr. Page.”

The imperial guard called Ian.

“We have arrived.”

After that everyone left the carriage, the first thing they saw was a tower with an ivory color, of course.

They could see the old ivory tower and its surroundings.

The stone tower which was built with rough and unsharpened rocks.

Compared to the ivory tower of the royal palace, which was built very carefully with the finest shape stone, It looked very different.

“For two days, we will stay near the slave village. During the days, the crown prince allowed you to tour the old ivory tower freely.”

The village which had an offensive name, ‘slave village.’

Ian knew this village very well. For the newbie adventurers they would think ‘why the heck did they name their village like that’, but the name represented its history and foundation.

‘It was the village where slaves of the ivory tower lived.’

A long time ago the old ivory tower was filled with mages. At that time, people who worked for the tower formed a small sized village. Even after the ivory tower moved near the royal palace, people stayed in the village, and now their descendants lived there independently.

‘Its name is still odd though.’

Their descendants named their own town voluntarily.

No outsider would be able to argue about it.

“And other followers come to me, I will lead you to your place to stay.”

In the village, the crown prince was talking with the village headman. It sounded like they were having a good time, as they laughed a lot. Although most of the laughs came out from the crown prince, the village headman smiled often.

“We never expected you to come to this old rural village. It’s our honor and blessing which will stay for decades.”

“Hahaha! You make me smile. Right, how’s your life?”

“Actually, we had a year of bad harvest...”

Recently, Ian suddenly realized that he was quite unique. The crown prince, the fool.

‘To normal people, he is not bad...’

Not nobles, mages, nor other princes but normal people. To normal people, he acted as a normal man. Of course, it wasn’t due to his hidden talent as a good king, nor warm hearts that worried his people. Only the people who seemed lower than him. Only the people who really respected and were afraid of him. Only the people who would do everything as he ordered. He may not have felt ‘it’ from them.

‘Inferiority.’

Of course, the fact that he regarded his people as lower than him didn’t make him a good person. But still, it was better than nothing.

‘Better than doing his mad things to everyone.’

Maybe, that’s the reason he acted nicely to Ian suddenly. Ian wasn’t a member of the ivory tower yet, he was of low birth. Furthermore, Ian asked him that visiting the ruin was his wish.

-Since I accepted his request and brought Ian to here, Ian would be so honored!-

The crown prince might be thinking in that way.

‘Maybe he was unlucky that he was born with royal blood.’

This could be the reason the emperor tried to always cover for him.
He may think the same as Ian.

‘By the way, the tower... ’

Ian was now granted two days.

During these two days, he had to go underground to the ivory tower.
Since there were a few traps installed, it would take him some time.
He needed to arrange his time well.

“Excuse me, Boss.”

(ED Note: Captain has been changed to Boss)

Douglas said while tapping Ian.

Ian was regretting that he allowed him to call him Boss.
Ian didn’t expect him to keep calling him Boss until now.

“When will you visit the ivory tower?”

“Why do you ask?”

“I, I want to tour around there as well...”

It seemed Ian must visit there during midnight.
As Ian decided, he spoke.

“Let’s visit there tomorrow.”

“Really? With me?”

“Yes.”

“Wow! Thank you!”

He respected Ian as if he was talking to elders.

It seemed now he realized the position of the mage.

Well, even in his former life, he never acted rude to him, though.

“And Boss, take this...”

“Hmm?”

Douglas handed Ian something.
It was a flask with red liquid.

“What is it?”
“Shhh! It’s a healing potion that I made.”
“Healing potion?”

It was a basic level potion of alchemy.
But, it wasn’t that easy to be made by such a young kid.

“My daddy told me not to show this to anyone, but I give you this especially.”

As he was sharing a big secret, he acted carefully.

“Thank you.”

Ian hid the potion into his bag quickly.

‘So he is a genius indeed.’

It seemed he was doing something while looking at the illustrated book. However, Ian never expected him to complete his potion this quickly. Ledio’s concern was understandable.

“Mr. Page and other followers, please use this house.”

They arrived at the hut with the guidance of the soldier.
It wasn’t that great a house, but it was one of the best houses in the village.

“Have a good rest.”

The night went deeper.
During the night, the soldiers moved quickly.
Many camps were built surrounding the village.
To the north side, the camps of the imperial soldiers,
to the south side, the camps of the second royal knights were built.
As they were veterans, they built them quickly.

‘Sneaking out secretly will be my first obstacle.’

By watching the veteran soldiers work, Ian clicked his tongue.
He had to save his mana as much as he can.

‘Let’s do it slowly. Slowly.’

A few hours later, deep in the middle of the night, even the night guard was dozing off.
Ian’s ruin exploration had started.
Actually, it would be a dangerous place for exploration.

CHAPTER 23

THE BOOK OF DRAGON CHANTS (3)

It was a complete coincidence that Ian found the book of dragon chants.
After he had retired, he toured the continent, during the return to his home town.
Without a plan, without making preparations for war.
Just a random walking trip, filled with fresh air and under the stars.
The old ivory tower was just on his route.

‘I used to want to visit here in my life.’

In the past, Ian found a hidden wine storage under the old ivory tower.
The storage was chilled by a freezing spell.
Thanks to that, the wines in there were tastily fermented.

‘I can’t just leave it there.’

After he took some wines which were in a fine condition, he decided to dispel the freezing spell on the storage.
Its power source might have worked for a hundred years.
Enormous amounts of mana must have been injected to power the spell.
It was safer to dispel the magic to prevent further unexpected accidents.

‘Then I found something. There was a lower space under the storage.’

It figured out that the storage hadn’t been chilled by magic.
Of course, there was no source of mana as well.
It was cold energy coming from far underneath that was chilling the storage.

“It’s the same as before.”

The wine storage that he now visited earlier than in his former life.
It had stayed the same as in his memory.
Chilling air, magic sealed wooden wine containers.
The wide area was filled with containers.

Most of them were empty containers.

‘I don’t know who made it, but he must be an alcohol lover.’

Ian approached the large sized wine container, which was located in the centre. It was so huge that it might be able to contain 10 grown men in there. It was fixed to the ground.

Tong Tong!

Ian gently knocked on the large wine container. It echoed back as it sounded hollow. Like in his former life, it has a big size, but contained no wine in it.

Bang!

There was no need for hesitation. He smashed the container with his magic. Its insides were then revealed. It wasn’t an ordinary wine container. It only looked like a wine container. In reality, it had no bottom. Instead, the rocky floor of the ivory tower was revealed.

‘He hid the entrance quite smartly.’

In the past, Ian thought the entrance must be hidden by some high-level technology. For instance, hidden by magic or a magic operated door. Just like the entrance of the wine storage, he expected some entrance with magic.

‘And I figured out that the entrance was under the container.’

As those words were said, the foot of the candle was dark. He was absentminded. It caused him to feel ashamed of himself until now.

Grrrrrrrr!

Ian strongly pushed the rocky floor to side. He enhanced his strength with mana.

*Whirrrrr... *

With freezing air, a staircase was revealed.

It was so small that he needed to squeeze himself inside to go down further in his former life.

‘Not this time.’

Since Ian had the body of young boy, he didn’t need to.

Maybe this was the first time that he was thankful to have a young body.

Splash!

The water under the staircase welcomed Ian first.

The underground was invisibly dark.

A single light orb wasn’t enough.

“Light.”

After he made a few more light orbs, he was finally able to find the way.

Although he had been here before, he couldn’t find the way as he was blinded.

Furthermore, in a deeper area, ‘the thing’ would come out.

‘Gargoyle.’

After passing the narrow aisle, he arrived at a round room.

There were no further paths in the wide room.

In the middle of it, there was a statue.

In his former life, when he first saw that gargoyle statue, he freaked out.

He thought it was just a statue.

‘Who would have imagined that there was a gargoyle under the ivory tower?’

In addition, he was able to recognize one important truth.

There was no mage who could tame the gargoyle.

Which meant the underground wasn’t made by the ivory tower.

‘From the wine storage to these gargoyles.’

After the mages moved their tower, someone probably came here and made it. Not only in his former life, this time as well.

*Crack! Grrr... *

The gargoyle statue started to move while removing the dust on it. Its surface would rupture soon and reveal its terrible appearance. This time, he was prepared.

KAAARRRRKK-!

With its strange grow, a grey colored gargoyle jumped out. It leered at Ian as it came dribbling towards him. It seemed the gargoyle decided to eat him.

‘Its eyes were purple.’

Its eyes were shining like amethysts. Ian heard that its eyes are a very rare alchemy ingredient. With its appearance, Ian could admit that.

‘In my former life, I couldn’t look at it clearly.’

In the past, he was freaked out and used too much force. An unimaginable magic that he wouldn’t dare to use with his current body. Naturally he didn’t have any time to see it in detail. Not just destroyed it, he turned it into dust.

‘Ledio will like it.’

Luckily, Ian also had his alchemist this time. He might brew some nice elixir for him.

“Aqua ball.”

A basic magic like fire ball. A few aqua balls were revealed around him. It wasn’t that useful against a gargoyle. It was just simple water balls, while its opponent had stone-hardened skin.

‘The power is not always the answer.’

The current Ian didn’t have enough power to destroy the gargoyle with a single magic.
He didn’t drink the half elixir either.
So, he needed to increase the efficiency of his spells.

“Aqua ball.”

Numerous water balls smashed the gargoyle.
Of course it didn’t receive damage from it.
The gargoyle just got wet from it.

“Aqua...”

“Kaaaaarkk!”

It rushed towards Ian while screaming.
It seemed Ian’s water balls made it angry.
Nevertheless, Ian just kept shooting water balls.
Aqua balls were reloaded endlessly.

“Karr, Karrrr...!”

Ian avoided its attack like a snake.
Now the gargoyle started to stretch its wings.
It looked mad now.

‘I wouldn’t be able to avoid it.’

There was a clear limitation of magically enhanced body.
It wasn’t impossible to avoid the charge of a gargoyle with its wings.
The gargoyle knew this as well by its instinct.
Ian moved to his second plan.

“Kaaaaaaa-!”

It cried with confidence.
The confidence that the little young boy would become its food with this attack.
It started to charge with its wings.
Its speed was dramatically increased.

And Ian,

“Ice wall.”

An ice wall suddenly erupted out of nowhere.

Thanks to the cold energy nearby, the speed of spell casting was twice as fast.

Did he make it to shield him from the charge of the gargoyle?

No, he didn't mean to.

He didn't make a wall in front of him. Instead he made it underneath him.

Smash!

Its body smashed the ice wall.

it was strong enough for its upper body to pass the ice wall.

In another point of view it was stuck in the ice.

It wouldn't able to move out for a while.

“Woah, I would die if I was standing behind the wall.”

Ian softly jumped down from the top of the ice wall.

He could only see the butt of gargoyle.

Satisfied, he focused mana on each of his hands.

Spark! Spaark! Spaaarrrrk!

lightning started to dance on each of his hands.

He wet the gargoyle for this moment, didn't he?

“Lightning.”

A powerful white lightning stream struck the gargoyle.

Actually, it struck the whole ice wall, including the gargoyle.

The Gargoyle's soft inner skin was hidden under its hardened outer skin.

And there was nothing better than lightning to burn its inner skin.

“KAARRRRRAAK!”

It screamed for a while.

When it stopped screaming, its dead body laid on the ground completely.

“Hew.”

Its burnt smell filled the air.
It certainly wasn't a nice smell.
It caused him to feel nauseated.

‘It should be open now.’

According to Ian's memory, a new aisle should be revealed after killing the gargoyle.
More precisely, at the center where the gargoyle stood petrified before, a wide hole
had appeared under the statue base.
It should be same this time.

*Thud! Thud! Crrrrr... *

As he expected.
A hole started to appear at the centre.
It was almost there.
It would be there under the hole.
But he needed to do something before going down.

‘This is the important part.’

Holding its leg, Ian drew the corpse of the gargoyle near the hole.
It was as heavy as its size.
Thanks to help of mana, he could move its body.

“Ah, its eyes first.”

It didn't seem to be an enjoyable process, but he had no choice. It was a precious
ingredient.
Taking a breath, he took out its eyes.
They were as hard as amethyst.

“Hmm not bad.”

It was a much easier process since its texture was stone like.
If it was squishy, Ian would feel sick.

After that, Ian restarted moving the corpse.
Then he pushed it away into the hole.
It fell for a long time since the hole was deep.
A few seconds later,

BANG! BAAANG! BaBam!

Sounds of explosions were heard.
It was just the beginning.
Not only explosions, many other noises were heard.
The sound of lightning, freezing and so on.
Each sound recalled some great magics.

‘He installed stupidly many traps.’

It was the sound of ‘Mana Trap.’
In his former life, Ian dealt with it by himself.
There were no problems since he had used the greatest shield magic, but right now he
wouldn’t be able to endure it.

‘It seems to have ended.’

The noises stopped.
There might be a few traps still unactivated, but he would be able to take care of it.

“Feather Fall.”

The book of dragon chats was close now.
And a few ‘Useful’ items.
All of them would be staying under the hole.
Ian jumped down the hole with slow falling magic.

CHAPTER 24

THE BOOK OF DRAGON CHANTS (4)

Ian stepped on the corpse of the gargoyle.
It became a slimy sticky liquid.
It shouldn't be called a corpse anymore.

'It seems most of the traps have activated.'

But he must hurry.
Mana traps are not single-use traps.
Whenever it restores its mana, it would be ready to activate again.
Hence, it wouldn't stop its function completely, unless Ian removes its mana source.
It was a similar mechanism to the chilling magic on the wine container.
And the source was Ian's target.

"I meet you earlier than I thought."

Ian approached the golden table on the lowest floor of the underground.
A single book sat neatly on the table there. There was no dust on it even after it had passed many ages.
It had an impressive appearance that was decorated with jewels.

"The book of dragon chants."

It was the very source that operated the systems of the underground of the old ivory tower.
The book itself had a function of storing mana.

"And this note is still here."

[It is not an item that humans dare try to possess.] [Especially you, who is reading this note now]

That's all about the notes.

Being honest, the first statement of the notes was quite true.
Most of the humans wouldn't be able to understand the book's very first sentence.
Of course, Ian didn't agree with the second statement of the note.

'Who would write this?'

The old ivory tower where no more mages were left.
Someone used this area as his home.
And the wine containers must have been his masterpiece.

'A dragon, most likely?'

But what dragon would have left a note in the human language?
A note that's teasing the founder?
A mystery that Ian had thought about in his former life.
But the conclusion was that he didn't know.
But.

Burnn!

The note got burned whenever it was touched.
Even a single message was enchanted with a spell.
This mysterious man who hid the book of dragon chants here, he must have been a great mage.

'And a freak.'

After Ian wiped off the ashes on his hand, he picked the book up from the golden table.
Mana was spreading to every part of the underground through the table. Especially the mana which must be disconnected, the mana that connected to the mana traps. Otherwise, his hesitation would let the traps be activated again. In that case, Ian wouldn't be able to survive.

Whirrrr...

The sound of disconnecting the mana from the table was echoing through the area.
Now the mana traps and the chilling magic on the wine containers was dispersed

'In this life,'

Ian looked at the book in relief.
Indeed, it was an astonishing item.
A perfect proof that dragons once lived in this world.
An ultimate power that returned Ian to the past.

‘I may approach this experiment in a different way...’

While planning, Ian opened the book.
His hand muscles still remembered his former action.
However, something strange happened.

“...huh?”

Ian couldn’t take his eyes off the book.
He just couldn’t. It was different from the former life.

‘Empty space...?’

It was supposed to be filled with dragon words.
But now, between the words, there were many empty spaces replacing the words.
It seemed like some specific words are missing.

‘What happened?’

Ian looked through the book carefully.
What kind of words were missing?

‘Oh my.’

After reading it several times, he could make one conclusion. The cause may be uncertain, but there were things the missing words had in common.

‘Words from the golden dragon tribe.’

Golden dragon tribe.
Dragons who had a golden hide and scales.
In old legends, they were the tribe who managed the time-space dimension. Of course the legend was true, Ian proved it himself by returning to his past.

‘Only the words of the golden dragon tribe are missing’

The Golden dragon tribe’s words, which Ian was researching, which allowed him to time travel. And those words were omitted in the book of dragon chants. Every single word of it.

‘How?’

Ian already gave up thinking about the impossibility of this situation. Dragon chants and time rewinding itself were unrealistic things. It was already far away from possibility and impossibility. However, he needed to find out the reason it was missing. It must be very critical and important for further dragon chants researches.

‘Maybe because I already used it?’

It was the deduction that was the most likely to make sense. Ian rewound time with the golden dragon chants. What would this mean? It meant that when he restores his power, he could control time with his will. Ian used to feel quite excited about it.

‘And if these chants had regulation of time control...’

Ian paused his thinking for a while. He closed the book, then arranged his mana. To recite words of the Golden Dragons.

‘...!’

As he had expected. The words of the Golden Dragons that were missing in the book, Ian couldn’t recite any one of them. Dragon chants were not just a word that could simply be spoken out using his tongue. They were spoken through mana, which literally meant a word whose root came from mana itself.

There was only one conclusion that he could make. Once dragon chants were used, they vanished.

So they're likely to be single-use words.

Not only the dragon chants of the Golden Dragons, but all dragon chants that were recorded in the book.

'I had a hope that I could rewind time again and again.'

This was a shocking truth he never expected.

One of his greatest insurances had disappeared.

And what would have happened if he never knew about it?

A heavy burden was added on his second life.

"Hmm."

There were no more benefits to be gained from meaningless worry.

He decided to collect the things he needed and think about future problems later.

Ian investigated underneath the table.

If it's the same as in his former life, there must be a box somewhere.

A box that will be very useful.

'There it is.'

Ian's hand reached towards the box.

He pulled its handle.

Shiid

The box was pulled as it came out from the drawer.

Inside it, there were precious treasures.

It was the very reason that Ian didn't want to receive money as his rewards.

'There is no reason not to take it.'

It would be very useful whenever he needed money.

It was better for Ian to prepare some money for future use. He may ask someone to support him financially, but the best money was the money he can use without any third party's help.

'First, let's take the most precious,'

He wanted to take it all if possible.
But he couldn't take it for now.
He had brought only one bag, a small one at that.
He had no choice.

'I feel like I am a tomb raider.'

Well, actually it might be a good way to describe him.
He visited a ruin without any eyes on him.
He found a secret passage.
He took ancient artifacts and treasures, and he was reluctant to leave the rest of the treasures he couldn't carry.
It was a perfect way to describe him.

'But why...'

Now his bag was filled with the greatest rank of jewels.
He obtained the book of dragon chants, and the eyes of the gargoyle.

'... Do I feel so satisfied?'

Ian felt hardened.
It even wiped away the shock of the missing dragon words.
It was an awkward feeling.
A feeling of a successful tomb raider.
Should he shout out 'Jackpot!' for now?

"...Let's move out haha."

The bag full of treasures, Ian carried it on his back.
He wanted to leave this place quickly.
To remove this awkward satisfaction.

CHAPTER 25

THE FINEST INVESTMENT

“Where have you been at this early morning?”

It was quite early in the morning and everyone was still sleeping. Except, Ledio, who was standing at the door of the hut and greeted Ian. He was a man who didn't sleep much.

“Oh you woke up quite early.”

“My previous life trained me to do so, haha.”

Ledio made a smile to break this awkward situation. Then, he looked at the Ian's beg interestingly.

“What is about that bag...?”

“Ah, I have something for you.”

After Ledio's question, Ian started to sift through his bag. Soon, he pulled out violet-colored stuffs and put them on the table. Two pieces which looked alike amethysts.

“What is that?”

“Eyes of gargoyles.”

“Hik!”

Ledio inhaled short breath with surprise.

Eye of gargoyles. He never saw it in real, but he knew the value of it very well. His reaction was natural as an alchemist. To alchemists, it was valued as much as an artifact to a mage.

“T, truly is it...”

“I pulled it out with my very hand, it can't be fake.”

“D, did you, pulled it yourself?”

Did that mean Ian had hunted a Gargoyle? Where?

It was very rare ingredient since it wasn't a commonly found monster normally.

'Where the heck did he find it?'

This boy, Ian, had sneaked out and when he returned, he chucked out the eyes of a gargoyle all of a sudden.

How mysterious a boy he was.

Ledio started to feel more suspicious of Ian, more than before.

"Is this can be used to brew elixirs? I don't know that much detail of its usage."

"H, hold on a second."

Ledio rapidly pulled out and searched through his illustrated book.

He always treated and held it like it was a treasure box.

"...It says even simply swallowing it as raw will works as an elixir. In addition If a taker has a mana heart, it will make his mana more dense."

That was a good news to Ian.

The quantity of a mana pool was important, but also the density of mana was quite important to a mage. Even with the same magical spell, a mage who had denser mana could yield a stronger spell result.

'But I don't like to swallow it raw though.'

Firstly, it was too big to swallow by single bite,

Secondly, It was hard as a jewel.

Thirdly, it was once the eyes of a monster.

Ian wanted different way to consume it.

"And there are quite many ways to brew a potion with eye of gargoyle. Let's see, the best elixir that can be brewed with it is..."

That was a relief. There was a way to brew it to some potion.

Ian drank a water in the cup, on the table.

He felt a small sense of excitement.

'The best elixir, huh?'

In former life, he didn't have many chance to use elixirs.

He had drunken them a few times, but only after he already grew up and reached a high level of magic. When he was young enough to receive benefits of elixirs fully, he only allowed to drink basic elixirs which were supported by the academy.

"Ah, I found it."

Soon, Ledio found the best recipe for brewing an epic quality elixir with the eye of gargoyles.

While showing Ian the section, Ledio said.

"Five breaths of red dragon?"

"What an immense name, isn't it?"

'Five breaths of red dragon' was a name of the elixir.

Well it was dramatic name, indeed.

"As its name, it requires a lot of crazy ingredients. Look at these ingredients. I wonder is it even possible to brew."

Ledio pointed ingredients section of it.

Indeed, it was an assemble of such precious ingredients.

Even Ian, who wasn't good about alchemist, heard many of their names.

Eye of Gargoyle, root of Mandragora, leaf of Ambrosia, blood of Ogre.

And there were plenty more ingredients on the lists which Ian never heard of it.

"I showed it to you since it was one of the best elixir. But, I don't think it's possible. As you can see, there are no exact required amount of ingredients, right? It means even my ancestors failed to brew it, to say nothing of me..."

Ledio knew his limit very well.

Even if he acquired those ingredients, he couldn't guarantee that he can brew this great elixir successfully.

He would waste these precious ingredients for nothing.

'Where I think I can collect these ingredients.'

Ian thought, on the other way.

It seemed he can obtain it eventually.

Of course it would take long, but he needed a talented alchemist like Douglas anyway, to brew such artifact level elixir.

There would be enough time for Douglas to grow enough to support Ian with his powerful talent.

“I will get those ingredients for you.”

“What? B, but as I told you...”

“I’m not saying that I will bringing those immediately. It will take some time. Until then, how about do research about it. Researching was a deal between you and me, do you remember?”

Yes. Ledio made a deal with Ian.

Ian promised to let him survive from mana addiction and ultimate treatment for it, while Ledio research custom elixirs for Ian.

“With my skill it may takes longer than you think. Honestly, it may impossible. please consider that...”

“I don’t mind how many years will it take. I won’t pressure you about it.”

“Hmmm...”

Nevertheless, Ledio seemed unconfident.

Ian needed some new topics to encourage him.

“And Douglas,”

Ian slowly mentioned the name.

Ledio’s most precious person, Douglas.

“He seems quite interesting with alchemy.”

“...Recently, yes he does.”

“There must be special reason.”

Without further explanation, Ledio already knew the reason.

He must be desperate to help his father and let him survive.

To brew a treatment by his own hand, on the day when the Randeor flower became useable.

“I heard that alchemy is your family business for ages.”

“...”

“Douglas must inherit some talent through your blood.”

“But he’s still young...”

“He made a cure potion, I saw it.”

“...!”

With Ian’s confession, Ledio was surprised.

A few days ago, Ledio was amazed by his son’s talent. Recently, his son looked up the illustrated book a few times, then suddenly he made a basic cure potion by himself.

‘I never expected him to brew a potion without any help of measuring tools...’

Even basic potion needed exact measuring.

If not, the potion will be effectless.

But, Douglas measured the amounts required of it simply with his own sense.

It was impossible to happen in Ledio’s ken.

“As I know, alchemist’s are treated very well. Furthermore, there is a special academy for alchemy in the royal palace, isn’t there?”

Indeed, a talented alchemist was treated very well.

As Ian said there was a special academy to educate talented alchemist.

It was worth it to educate them.

And wouldn’t it mean their future were quite bright?

Ledio must’ve had a fine life until he suffered from mana addiction.

“With this amount,”

Ian sifted through the bag again.

These time, he pulled out a few of the finest diamonds.

“You won’t need to worry about financial issue. It would be enough to educate Douglas.”

“W, where did you get all these...”

A sudden rain of jewels.

And every single of them had the best qualities.

Ledio couldn’t help himself to be stunned.

"I'm considering an investment."

"What sort of investment..."

"For all researches for Ledio, and,"

Ian looked at the inside of the hut.

He could see Douglas' face, who were still sleeping innocently.

"The talent of Douglas."

With Ian's suggestion, Ledio closed his eyes.

For a while he spoke nothing as he thought deeply.

It was about the future for his son. He needed some time to think.

"...The cure he made. Honestly, I was surprised as well."

Ledio broke the long silence.

"I could see some talent on him. But sir, it was an basic of basic potion. It didn't require any complex measuring skills. Did you know that?"

"Yes I do."

"Then you must know it as well. It NEVER guarantees that Douglas will become a great alchemist. Did you know that?"

"Yes I do."

"And you saying you want to invest on his talent which is yet uncertain?"

"Well, that's the basic rule of investment."

"Ha...!"

Ledio sighed due to his worries.

Of course, it was such a sweet suggestion.

Not just lengthening his life, Ian also suggested supporting Douglas. He may bowed to Ian with full of thanks.

But.

'It will decide the future life of Douglas. I must consider it carefully.'

He might risk his own son's life.

He already suffered enough by mages.

Mages were untrustworthy.

What if Ian couldn't get the elixir he wanted?

Not just Ledio himself, but even Douglas failed to brew it?
Then Ledio couldn't know the result.
Even Ian shouldn't be trusted fully.

'But... '

Nevertheless, he couldn't decide easily.

The suggestion of Ian, those jewels were precious enough to provide Douglas to receive every benefits and educations which were allowed to non-noble people. Furthermore, his general life quality must be increased.

'Wouldn't it be better for Douglas?'

He never considered things like this carefully.

Douglas was his everything.

Like most of parents in the world.

"The more I experience you, the more I don't think you are just young boy."

He mumbled while shaking his head.

He made a decision after the sun arose completely.

"I have no idea what kind of secret you have... But!"

Ledio continued his word while taking the jewels quickly.

"Keep your promise! Even if I failed you, and even if Douglas won't be a great alchemist! Well, of course, he will be a great alchemist. I am sure my boy will. Anyway..."

As Ian analyzed before, he spoke a lot when he felt comfortable and relieved.

CHAPTER 26

ENTER GREENRIVERDIUM (1)

When there were about ten days left to the capital, the soldiers started to feel exhausted.

As they became loose, exhaustion started to tease them.

Even those self-prided knights' alertness became loose.

It may have been caused by the relief that came from being close to their home.

"We'd better focus from now on."

Captain Oliver started to re-encourage them.

"At this very moment, we are carrying a woman who is suspected to be a spy from an enemy country. If it is true, then her country might want to intercept her at this moment when we are exhausted."

What Oliver said was quite reasonable.

Ian agreed with it.

Until now, they didn't have any chance.

Two 3rd class mages were sustaining the mana prison, and captain Oliver guarded the prison solidly. Furthermore there were many soldiers and knights surrounding it.

"And suddenly if someone's head is rolling on the ground, the owner of the head must be one of us, whose head was full of missing their home and families."

Just after his short speech, the soldiers held their heads.

Captain Oliver was serious and his words contained power.

No one dared to take it as a joke.

He was a powerful and serious man who even dared to point his sword at mages.

"A cut off head has no honor on it. It becomes pale since there is no blood in it, the tongue is out, and the eyes lost its focus. Unless any of you want to show that disgusting head to your own family, never lose focus and feel relieved."

Soldiers grabbed their spears firmly.
None of them wanted to show their cut off head to their family.

“Sir, Yes sir!”

He was the man with charisma and wisdom.
Ian looked at him impressed.

‘I’d better avoid conflict with him as much as possible.’

In this new life, would Ian and Oliver choose differently?

‘I’d better not lose focus on Cecelia.’

For Ian, there would be no benefits to him if Cecelia successfully contacts with other coldwalkers or was even rescued by them.

‘It’s going to be tough in many ways.’

Ian knew of the existence of coldwalkers.
And only Cecelia knew about that.
But what if she managed to contact other coldwalkers?
Or if they even rescued her?

‘She will speak about me first.’

Then, the Coldwood empire would start their diversion on him.
The appearance of a boy who knew a top secret of their empire.
They wouldn’t simply overlook it.

‘I’d better walk.’
Precisely, he decided to guard the prison.
A prison where Cecelia was arrested.
Ian took off the carriage and started to walk near the prison.

“Sir Ian, why do you walk?”
“I just like to.”

A soldier who became familiar with him asked.

Ian didn't feel it necessary to explain further.

*Clip-clop Clip-clop... *

*Step Step Step... *

*Clip-clop Clip-clop... *

*Step Step Step... *

The steps of horses and soldiers shook the ground.

The march was rearranged and continue its journey.

One, two... five, seven, and finally ten days had passed.

"Finally..."

Finally the long journey was about to finish.

The capital of Greenriver empire, 'Greenriverdium,' was now within the sight of their bare eyes.

Soldiers who were missing their home and family, Douglas who was visiting his old hometown, Vanessa who hadn't visited the capital before, everyone was looking towards same point. The wall of Greenriverdium.

It was very near now.

"Crown prince! Deign to be present!"

The soldiers in the front line shouted while waving huge flags.

Each of them represented the empire, royal blood and knights.

For ten days, the perfect march, which never allowed any carelessness, finally arrived to the capital, Greenriverdium.

"Crown Prince! Deign to be present!"

Soon, the march of the crown prince completely passed the gate.

Soon the biggest capital of Greenriver empire revealed its might.

Mogrian province was not able to be compared.

A mega sized capital which was the most civilized city.

"Crown Princeeeee! Deign to be presentttttt!"

Now their shouting sounded like crying.

Numerous citizens made way.

All of them kneeled on the ground and bowed to the crown prince.
At this moment, beggars, fat merchants, noble ladies, everyone were equally bowed down to the prince.

“Crown Prince! Deign... huh?”

The soldiers suddenly stopped their shouting after they saw something.

“HALT!”

A voice which was magnified with mana.
It came from a crowd at the front, from around twenty people who wore white robes.
Their appearance showed their identity without a doubt.
Mages of the ivory tower.

“With what authority do you dare interrupt the march of his highness?”

Quickly the knights blocked the mages approaching.
Of course, Oliver was at the centre of them.

“By order of the Emperor.”

With those words a white bearded mage walked through the crowd. He was an old man with a simple non-decorated robe. Interestingly, he was holding a long staff which was much taller than him.

“Tower lord...?”

With mumbles of the captain, everyone was surprised.
The mage with a long staff, the highest ranked man right after royal blood, the tower lord of ivory tower, 5th class arch mage, ‘Habert Leon’ was there.

“Long time no see, Captain.”

“Tower lord, why are you... by the way, did you say by order of the emperor?”

“I received and brought Our highness’ order.”

Tower lord Habert opened the order.

Not an mana-order that Ian received before, a real order which was written by the emperor himself.

“The crown prince, Hyden Greenriver, receive the order of emperor.”

Everyone knelt their one leg down.

The order itself was a will and voice of the emperor.

Even the crown prince had to obey it.

“From now on, since I assign all authority and responsibility of inspection and guard duty of Cecelia to the ivory tower, I order you to transfer Cecelia to them with haste.”

So it meant hand over Cecelia to the ivory tower.

Captain Oliver’s face was slightly tinted with unpleasantness.

He didn’t even have a chance to investigate her. Since he was planning to start it at the headquarter of the royal knights, which was located at Greenriverdium.

“...Seems it was an urgent issue for you.”

“Why not? We’d better figure it out quickly, wouldn’t we?”

The tower lord replied lightly to captain’s suggestive question.

Furthermore, he tapped the captain gently and made a smile with confidence.

“You better rest and recover. We will do our best for the investigation, so please don’t worry about it from now on.”

Yet, Oliver wasn’t feeling comfortable.

However, he had no choice. It was an order of the emperor.

Neither the captain nor even the crown prince were able to go against it.

“Hand over the criminal to the tower lord.”

When Oliver called Cecelia as ‘criminal,’

“Captain, she is not yet a criminal. Until everything revealed is crystal clear, she is a mage of the ivory tower. Please be careful with your words.”

Tower lord Habert requested a correction.

It wasn’t a correction for Cecelia, individually.

There were many eyes that were watching the situation.

His request was rather for keeping the pride of the ivory tower.

“Oh, Tower lord!”

Two mages, who were sustaining the mana prison of Cecelia, greeted the tower lord with a smile.

“It must have been a hard journey.”

“No sir, rather Cecelia...”

“Not now gentlemen. Let’s move her first, we will talk about her later.”

After the mages achieved what they wanted, they made way.

Like the others, they bowed their heads.

Well it was quite pointless for now.

“...C, Crown Prince! Deign to be present!”

The march of the crown prince restarted.

With less power.

A few minutes later,

“Those bastards. How dare...!”

Not only the crown prince who used to hate the ivory tower,

“Captain! It’s unfair!”

“Even though it was an order, but I can’t accept it!”

Knights of the second royal knight also started to complain about it.

It was a natural response. From the north to the capital, they tried not to lose their attention and do their best, then all of sudden they were taking the criminal they were carrying with their best. Furthermore, aren’t they her colleagues?

“What’s going on?”

Even the innocent Vanessa was scared.

It showed well how unstable a situation it was.

“It’s not a big deal. Don’t care about it, mom.”

On the other side, Ian seemed not interested.

‘It’s rather good news.’

Ian knew very well about the ivory tower.

The procedure of the tower, and the ugly parts of them.

How did he know it so well?

‘I already experienced everything while I once was the tower lord in my former life.’

CHAPTER 27

ENTER GREENRIVERDIUM (2)

'I've already experienced everything. I once was the tower lord in my former life.'

As an experienced person, Ian could summarize the ivory tower in one phrase:

'The tower of pride.'

Although they were a little bit lower than the royals, they wanted to be higher than others, and men who actually rule over others, a group which was assembled by those men with pride. That was the identity of the ivory tower.

'They took her in urgently since they don't want to lose any more pride.'

Their action was totally based on political conflict.

They never care about Cecilia's safety.

Just,

'They didn't want the Knight order to dare to investigate a mage,'

The word 'dare,' Ian used the word on purpose.

It was the ivory tower's general view of the knights.

'Only the ivory tower must be allowed to deal with a mage's problems.'

No one should talk about it.

That was a guideline of the ivory tower, and their pride.

So, they couldn't allow knights to deal with Cecilia.

'But once Cecilia gets into the tower, their attitude will change.'

Outside of the tower they would never let their pride be lost.

Since every single mage represented the face of the ivory tower.

However, inside of tower, it would be different.

Whether rumors on her were true or false, many people had already seen, and rumors had already spread. Regardless of the truth, Cecilia would be treated as a criminal by the ivory tower, since she had shamed the ivory tower's name. They would place her in the deepest jail of the ivory tower.

'It will be much safer and secured.'

The ivory tower was an assembly of the strongest mages.

And the underground prison was made by such a group.

It could be safer than the emperor's bedroom.

Honestly, Ian could guarantee it.

The jail of the ivory tower must be much safer than the headquarters of the knights.

Cecilia wouldn't ever be able to contact the outsiders.

'It is nearly impossible for even coldwalkers.'

Hence, Ian agreed to the ivory tower's action.

For Ian, there was no need to worry about her anymore.

'Now I need to deal with the emperor, the Ivory tower, and the royals.'

After he calmed his thoughts, Ian looked around.

His mother was still enjoying the view of the capital.

Next to her, Douglas was sleeping.

And next to him...

"Hmm?"

Ledio's face was strange.

His face turned pale as if he was sick.

It was too early for the mana addiction though.

"Are you okay?"

"...Pardon?"

"You don't seem to be alright."

"Ah... it's nothing. Haha..."

Actually, he had seemed uncomfortable before they entered the capital.

But after he saw members of the ivory tower, his face had paled dramatically.

‘One of them must’ve been related to his mana addiction.’

‘It seems he doesn’t want to talk about it yet.’

Ian wouldn’t ask further, since Ledio wanted to hide something.

Only time will solve this.

The more urgent he felt, the more he would seek Ian’s help, anyway.

“Woah! Woah!”

Suddenly, the coachman stopped the carriage.

There must be a longer way to go to arrive at the royal palace.

What is going on?

“Sir Ian, the crown prince is looking for you.”

It was a familiar voice of an imperial soldier.

With his guide, Ian hopped off the carriage.

Soon, he recognize the place he was standing.

“This place...”

It was one of mansions that royals used to stay when they left the royal palace. In addition, it was a house which was gifted to Ian when he reached to 5th class of mage.

“Do you like it?”

The crown prince asked to Ian.

“It’s the house my father has gifted to you.”

Ian was caught by sentiment. He had been 26 years old when he had received this mansion. Furthermore, he received it from not the current emperor nor the crown prince, but Ragnar, who succeeded to take over the throne. However, this time, he received it 14 years earlier.

‘It is quite a nice mansion, actually.’

Its distance to the royal palace and the ivory tower was proper.

Furthermore it was closer to the merchandise zone, which was the centre of the capital's finance.

It was the best place to enjoy the city life.

'How fortunate. I was thinking about getting a new house.'

This mansion couldn't be bought with thousands of gold.

Ian couldn't find any place better than this.

"I appreciate your grace, your highness."

"Grace? Hahaha!"

With Ian's response, The crown prince, Hayden, laughed out loud.

Now he started to like this boy.

Not as much as the captain, but near him. Even if he contained monstrous talent within him, unlike other geniuses, he never let Hayden have a sense of inferiority.

'What if I'd be able to control him... '

And if Ian would become the greatest mage, Hayden might be able to wipe out all those arrogant mages and the tower lord.

Even simply imagining this made him smile.

"Hmm hmm! At first, let your family stay here, and then let's go to the palace. We need to meet my father first, don't you agree?"

Ian came to Greenriverdium by the order of the emperor.

It was good manners and an order to visit him as soon as possible, and Ian also was looking forward to meeting the emperor.

But before that.

".....If you'd allow me to do so, may I briefly introduce the mansion to my mother?"

It was an earnest request of Ian.

"Your mother? Oh, Sure. Do as you want."

And the crown prince allowed him to do so without any hesitation.

He also had a mother who had passed away.

“Mom, Come out and see this.”

Ian lead Vanessa from the carriage.
While pointing at the mansion Ian asked.

“What do you think about it?”

“What?”

“This mansion.”

“Why do you ask?”

“Just tell me what do you think about it.”

Why did he ask?

Vanessa had no idea of it.

Well it was a great mansion.

A mansion that couldn't be seen in the Mogrian province.

It seemed hundreds of times bigger than the hut she used to live in with Ian.

Maybe bigger than that.

“I don't know what to say. It does seems huge...”

“This is our home.”

“And beauti... Huh?”

Suddenly, Vanessa fell silent.

“A house where we are going to live.”

“Y, you mean this?”

“Yes.”

“T, this mansion?”

“Yes yes.”

How long had Ian been waiting for this?

A wish that he had never succeeded in fulfilling in his former life.

Although he became great mage, transcended the limit of a human, he wasn't able to change the fate of his mother. Things he wanted to give to her, things he wanted to do with his mom. He couldn't accomplish any of it. But now, he finally accomplished it by rewinding time. Step by step, slowly.

“Would you like to go inside?”

While holding Vanessa's hand, he walked into the mansion.
Its interior appearance was much more beautiful than its exterior view.
A pond where fish were swimming, a magical fountain and numerous beautiful flowers and trees were decorating the garden.

"...Is it even a house where people live?"

"It used to be a royal's house."

"Royal blood...?"

"Now, let's go inside the room."

After crossing the garden they finally arrived at the mansion proper.
Comparing its size and general shape, this mansion was superior to the landlord's house.
A luxury which might be similar to 'The palace of the king.'
It was in essence a masterpiece of luxury.

"I wanted to ask you again. What do you think of it?"

"Hmm..."

Ian wanted to hear.
It's nice, great, what a wonderful house.
I doubt whether it's a dream or real.

"It's so big..."

He wanted to see a moment where his mother was caught in happiness with his own eyes.
A view that he couldn't see in his former life.
It was about to be shown.

"It's so huge, how can I even possibly clean up this area...?"

"..."

Ian couldn't say anything.
Even a mage who once was an 8th class arch mage, who was living his second life, couldn't expect her answer.

"Mom..."

“W, what? Is there anything wrong?”

A moment he wished for in his dreams.

It seemed he needed to wait a little longer.

CHAPTER 28

THE ROYAL PALACE (1)

“Do you want its waist to be tighter?”

“No, it’s fine.”

“For shoes, which one...”

Within the guest room where guests of the royal palace used to stay, Ian was surrounded by numerous maids. They were all young maids of the royal palace.

“Which one do you prefer? Rose or gold?”

“...I prefer gold.”

“Excellent choice sir!”

The maids were collecting clothes for Ian.

In addition to this, they were also clothing Ian.

However, since he was going to meet the emperor, this was an unnecessary process.

“Mr. Page, considering your age, his Highness allowed you to meet him directly rather than organising a council meeting.”

A servant’s voice was echoing in the room.

The room had a decent soundproof construction.

“Hence, you will meet his Highness after the council meeting.

The council meeting where every rank of noblemen gathered.

Ian had expected to meet him there.

That was a common royal manner which needed to be kept by the receiver of the emperor’s order.

However, the current emperor considered Ian’s age.

Since the council meeting might be too much pressure for a young boy, he allowed him to meet him personally.

“If there is anything you need, please don’t hesitate to ask these maids. They will serve

you properly with excellent skills.”

Yes, Ian could see their skills.

They quickly turned Ian into a noble gentleman.

“I understand.”

“Then, excuse me.”

The servant left the room very quietly.

People said they were trained to walk quietly, and the servant’s walk was as silent as a ninja.

‘Hmm. It’s bit nerve racking.’

Ian never had a chance to meet the current emperor in person. When he graduated the academy and started to gain an interest in politics, the current emperor had already been sick as a dead man.

‘I heard a lot about him, though.’

The public estimation of the current emperor was literally, perfect.

In politics, he managed to balance between nobles and the ivory tower and gathered the power of nobles sharply. In managing a country, even if it was an era of war, he managed for the country’s well-being. He was a man who would be recorded as a good and wise king.

‘Except his tenacity for the crown prince.’

Even though, the end of the current emperor wasn’t good.

He forcibly raised the crown prince as his reclamer, and eventually not only the 5th prince and the ivory tower turned away from him, but also the other nobles and people of Greenriver. And that was the biggest mistake he made.

‘Nevertheless, he was a great man.’

Often people called mages as a ‘sage’.

However, it’s one of the biggest misunderstandings about mages.

Ian was once an 8th class mage, however he was far from being a ‘sage.’

‘Sage’ itself only represented someone’s ‘magical talent.’

It didn’t represent the ‘wise’ nor ‘philosophical’.

‘Rather, many of them are lacking in wisdom.’

Most of today’s mages are narcissists.

Some mages locked their doors and just spent their lives on research.
For such men, that kind of ‘wisdom’ or ‘philosophy’ could be expected.

‘Even I wasn’t that much different from them.’

A mad magical research to overcome the wall formed by ‘class’,
Joining the unity war that Ragnar held.
These two things were everything Ian did in his former life.

‘On the other side, the emperor is on a different level of great man.’

A man with extreme wisdom and judgment.

And Ian was about to meet such a man.

It was natural to feel nervous.

The only emperor Ian had served in his former life was Ragnar.
And there was nothing special between them, since they were friends.

‘It will be nice if I can learn some lessons from him.’

Instinctively, Ian looked over at the window.

Of all the rooms in the palace, they let Ian wait at the closest room to the separated palace.

It was the palace where the royal princes were living.

Thanks to that, Ian could see the garden, that ‘the bastard’ loved so much.

‘What would he doing at this moment?’

He must be somewhere in the separated palace.

Born by a concubine, the fifth prince. The one who was the most like the current emperor, but the one who was cold blooded, unlike his father. The once old friend of Ian, but now he was Ian’s foe.

‘Ragnar.’

What should I do in this timeline?

Ian had thought about it since the first day he returned.

Yet, he couldn't get any clear answers.
However, there was one thing he was sure of.

'Pay back as much as I suffered.'

He hadn't grown up yet.
It was too early to take his revenge.
The despair, and betrayed heart.
Ragnar would suffer in same way.

"Sir Ian, his Highness is waiting."

A few minutes later, the servant reported to him.

"Let's go.'

Ian followed the servant.
On the way, many people passed Ian.
Not only servants, but nobles who were coming out from the council meeting.
Everyone glimpsed at Ian.

"Is he the mage?"
"The one who arrested the spy..."
"I heard that the spy was a 3rd class mage."

There were no differences between the northern territory and the capital.
Their faces were full of curiosity.
Though, since they knew he was called by the emperor, no one had doubts about his power.

"Impressive, even though he is still young."
"Seems the ivory tower are panicked about him."
"No doubt. That kind of talent is not the usual kind."
"It's much more than just unusual."
"What was it, the first mage? He called by this title."
"The legend among mages?"
"Heh? That's exaggerated..."

Noblemen were a type of men who always had their ears and eyes open.

They had a large amount of information concerning Ian.

“This way.”

Amongst all the whispering, he reached the main castle of the royal palace. Ian was standing in the space which was focused on the emperor’s glory.

“Your highness, the mage Ian Page requests to enter.”

“He may enter.”

Over the door of meeting room, a voice filled with depth had come out. It was the voice of emperor, Terry Greenriver.

“Please come in.”

The door was very well maintained, so it opened silently. Soon, Ian could see the inside of the meeting room.

“I bow to you, your highness.”

Next to the emperor stood the crown prince. Pretending he was familiar with Ian, he ostentatiously greeted him by raising his arm.

“Turn up your face.”

The emperor looked at Ian’s face in detail. His eyes looked like Ragnar’s. Actually, it should be the opposite way.

“The guest of the Northern territory, Ian Page, right?”

While reading a paper the emperor murmured. It was a report of Ian Page.

“In a short period, you contributed many things.”

“I appreciate your praise, your highness.”

“You don’t need to exert yourself. You wouldn’t have had a chance to learn all these manners, would you? It is enough, sit on the chair.”

Don't exert yourself. You wouldn't have had a chance to learn these manners.
Ian already heard exactly the same in his former life.
The moment when he met Ragnar the first time.
The bastard said the same thing.
Well said, Blood is thicker than water.

"You must have gone through many troubles. Do you like the mansion? I especially gave the whole of it to you."

"It was such a giant mansion that I had never even seen in a dream."

"So do you like it? Or not?"

The emperor trickily questioned.

Ian replied calmly.

"I really appreciate it. My mother was very happy about it."

"Hmm, I see."

The emperor nodded.

Ian's reply satisfied him quite.

"Then do you guess what I am going to say? The reason I sent the crown prince and invited you to the royal palace, and gave you the mansion instantly."

Of course, Ian knew it.

However, he had to choose what answer he will give to the emperor.

'Should I answer him straightly?'

Ragnar used to like to speak directly to the point, because he believed that the one who speaks directly was usually honest.

Since he was similar to his father, the emperor was more likely to like direct speech.

'No, not yet.'

It was too early.

Until he gets everything he wanted, he needed to pretend he was just a 12 years old boy.

"Isn't it because I have some special talent?"

“Talent? What talent?”

“According to people, my magical talent is better than others. So...”

Ian mumbled purposely.

“So you’re saying you are good at magic?”

“It’s putting me to shame, but yes that’s what I heard.”

“Do you think that’s all?”

“...”

“Really?”

Ian didn’t answer any longer.

Instead, he kept silence while moving sluggishly.

To pretend he was embarrassed, Ian purposely did it.

“Father, he is still a young kid. What more do you expect from him?”

The crown prince covered Ian. As he moving some expensive china, he made an embarrassed face. With this unexpected reaction from the crown prince, the emperor couldn’t say anything.

“...Very well then. Your talent, I value it highly. Even other mages are impressed by you.”

If there was no cover from the crown prince, the emperor would have tried to interrogate Ian more.

He hadn’t even started properly.

The boy contained an unfathomable amount of talent.

There were so many things to ask.

‘Rather, I’d better support the crown prince for now.’

This time, the crown prince covered Ian himself.

In this case it would be better for the emperor not to interrogate Ian further.

So that Ian would follow the crown prince more.

‘There is still enough time to ask.’

As the emperor determined, he changed the topic.

“As I heard, you contributed high merit for arresting the mage who was suspected as the spy of another country. Is it true?”

“As she tried to harm me, I just defended myself.”

“And you survived it, didn’t you? That’s the merit you earned.”

Surviving the mage’s assassination attempt, and he managed to catch her alive.
Furthermore, he figured out a mana inscription, which was a very important clue.
Ian deserved it.
And Ian had expected it.

“As a citizen of the empire, you contributed to the empire. Anyone who contributed must be rewarded. Tell me, is there anything you want?”

Finally, it had come.

The question Ian had been looking forward to listen to.

A special rewarding system of the current emperor, which the crown prince had mimicked.

‘I had thought about it a lot.’

Officially, It was Ian’s first visit to the royal palace.

He couldn’t ask for something specific.

Such as I am looking for a specific record.

I want to find something that is hidden in the royal palace.

He couldn’t ask those things.

Ian had thought about it for long, and finally he got the answer.

‘I am a young kid.’

The most important fact at the moment.

Ian was still a young boy.

Although he contained monstrous talent, it had no relationship with his age.

Yet most people would think like that.

“...I want to tour.”

“tour?”

It would be an inappropriate request if he was an adult.

Not only that, he would be looked at with suspicion.
A trick he used before with the crown prince.
That was an Ian's solution.

"I want to tour around many sides of the royal palace, and I want to illustrate it to my mom. To let her know that what it is the royal palace looks like, and how wonderful of a place it is."

CHAPTER 29

THE ROYAL PALACE (2)

“I wish to tour the interior of the royal palace and illustrate it to my mom. To let her know of the magnificence of the royal palace and its beautiful interior.”

Following Ian’s wish, the crown prince also spoke a few words in support of Ian.

“Ian had also visited the ruins of the old Ivory Tower. Ian is a boy who is full of curiosity. Please generously consider his wish, Your Highness.”

On this day, the crown prince was of great help to Ian as he added appropriate comments to support Ian. He would be a great resource to Ian for quite some time.

“Hmm.”

The Emperor pondered, the request was not a hard request, in fact, it was quite an easy one to be granted. He was about to reward him anyway. However, he just wanted to talk to Ian.

“Very well then.”

Following the simple answer, the Emperor pulled something out. It was a jeweled trinket the size of a hand.

“You will be granted access to most areas by simply showing the trinket.”

It had the sigil of the Emperor, which proved that Ian was the guest of the Emperor.

“In addition, you may ask a guard to guide you and show you around the palace.”

Ian gripped the trinket firmly.

“Is that all that you wish to receive?”

“I am very satisfied with this, your highness.”

“Then, I will give you the rewards I had prepared beforehand.”

“Follow me.”

At his order, a huge door was opened. Two servants came in while holding a heavy chest, followed by a few maids.

They were the maids who had dressed Ian.

“Show him.”

Click!

The servants placed the huge chest down in front of Ian.

They then opened the chest to reveal to Ian the reward which the Emperor had prepared for Ian.

“This is one of the rewards that I present to you.”

As the Emperor had said, it was indeed filled with the Emperor’s gold coins.

“In addition to the coins, these maids used to manage the partitioned palace. I will send them ahead to your mansion, so have a rest.

Coins and experienced maids, they were indeed excellent rewards.

‘Mother was worried about cleaning the mansion.’

Suddenly, Ian recalled his mother’s unexpected response.

Since Ian had planned to hire some servants anyway, there was no reason to refuse such welcome rewards.

“They will be able to support and serve mother to allow her to live luxuriously.”

“I appreciate your mercy and generosity, Your Highness.”



Ian finished the meeting with minimal obstacles.

Due to the tension with meeting the Emperor, his head was covered with sweat.

As he had experienced before in his past life, the Emperor was undoubtedly a great man.

The suspicion the Emperor felt towards Ian was palpable to him.

However, Ian had never expected to receive such an exquisite reward or that he would carelessly trust him.

‘He must’ve been suspicious of everyone. Even Ragnar.’

‘Suspicion and shrewdness were the basics of politics.’

Ragnar used to recite it.

He must’ve learned it from his father.

‘I don’t have much time left.’

The sun would set soon.

Before the sun sets, Ian had to acquire what he had been looking for today and the reason why he had requested the trinket.

As it was only his first visit, he had set a small but important goal.

His first target was the royal catacombs, which contained the coffins of previous Emperors and Empresses.

‘However, I must still sneak in.’

A millennia old tradition, the royal family buried previous Emperors and Empresses’ coffins in the royal catacomb.

The people called that place as ‘The haven of the royal family’.

‘It will be easy enough to approach it.’

Since the haven contained the previous Emperors and Empresses, they prohibited those not from the royal family from entering. However, with the trinket of the Emperor, Ian would be able to approach the haven. Even approaching it should be enough for him to sneak into the haven.

‘Quickly acquire what I need from there, and then move onto the royal library.’

From the library, there shouldn't be any problems.

As he had promised Ledio, he wanted to lend him a copy of some of the royal herbalism and alchemy records.

'However, there won't be that many useful records for Ledio.'

If the flower of Randor was so easily found in the records then it shouldn't even be considered a mysterious herb.

'But I need to show to him that I am making an effort.'

Ian needed to show him that he was trying.

So that he could gain Ledio's trust.

Thusly that trust will lead him to research elixirs for Ian.

Furthermore, Douglas will trust Ian as well.

'I will take care of the other goals later.'

This was enough for now. Concurrently, he didn't dare to steal artifacts which were kept in the royal treasure vault, nor the rare herbs from the royal alchemy room.

'For the artifacts and herbs, I will have to wait for the time when I have the chance to request them.'

The chance will come sooner or later.

Hence, for now, he needed to grab items that he needed at this very moment.

Items which no one will realize that they were stolen or that he had stolen them.

That was on Ian's to do list for today.

"Mr. Mage. How can I help you?"

The guards asked Ian gently.

The news had already spread throughout the palace that a young mage had entered the palace and was visiting.

Thanks to that, there were guards who recognized Ian's face, or guards who had guessed by their social sense.

"His highness told me to show this to you."

With the guise of an innocent child, Ian showed the trinket of the Emperor.

“Attention!”

The trinket represented the full will of the Emperor.
Thus the soldiers showed their full respect for it.

“Hmmm, where is the grand garden? I saw it in the book.”
“This way, please follow me.”

Thanks to the trinket, he was able to move around the palace with ease.
While receiving tour guides, he remembered a few of their faces.

‘Let’s pretend that I am an innocent tourist.’

Ian intentionally visited places where people normally wished to visit.
Such as the council meeting room, grand guardian walkway where statues of previous Emperors were held. After visiting some places where he was guided by the books, Ian planned to move in the direction of the haven of the royal family.

‘I hope to not meet that bastard.’

Confronting Ragnar in the royal palace.
It was the worst possible scenario Ian could ever imagine.
Would he able to control his anger if he saw him with his own two eyes?
What if his instinct leads him to murder him?
Ian could end his life with just a single wave of his hands.

‘Not yet. Not yet.’

While walking around the royal palace, Ian kept reminding himself to control his mind and to be patient
“Phew.”

After a while and to his relief, Ian still hadn’t met nor seen Ragnar.
Ian met with most of the guards to let them recognize his face.
Then Ian started to approach the haven of the royal family slowly.

‘The Haven was right next to the princess’ palace.’

Women who inherited royal blood, as well as princesses managed the haven of the

royal family.

It was a tradition of the royal family.

Princesses may often be regarded as expendable tools of politics, and it might cause them to resent that they were born as a girl and not as a boy. So the royal family made it a tradition for them, to let the princesses feel proud of themselves by managing a very sacred place where previous the Emperors and Empresses' had been buried.

"Zzzzz... *snort* ... Zzzz...!"

Finally, Ian had arrived at the entrance to the haven of the royal family.

At the entrance of the stairs which led to the catacombs, the guard who was supposedly keeping guard was having a nap.

'The other guards nearby were quite serious and careful.'

Until he reached this place, Ian had to show the trinket quite a few times.

But how ironic, that the very entrance of one of the most sacred sanctums was guarded so loosely.

Since it was the haven, they chose to be very quiet, and it resulted in this.

"Zzzz...!"

"Sleep."

Although he was already sleeping, Ian made him fall into a deeper sleep, just as a precaution.

Ian quickly infiltrated the inside of it.

The catacombs did not have a single light in it.

It was a haven that was inside of the darkness.

"Light."

With Ian's magic, he could have a very clear view of the catacombs.

On each side, there were many coffins that were aligned in pairs.

All of them were decorated with the emerald jewel which represented the Greenriver Empire.

'It was near the first Emperor's coffin, wasn't it?'

Ian went deeper inside of the haven to find the first Emperor's coffin.

As the Empire must've had a long history, there were many Emperors who had once ruled the empire.

Furthermore, the first must be the coffin the furthest away from the entrance.

'It must be somewhere near here.'

Ian finally arrived at the first Emperor and Empress' coffin.

Ian was searching near the coffin.

What was he searching for?

'A spot where I may find unexpectedly... '

Suddenly, Ian shone on the ceiling with the light.

Soon, he smiled, satisfied that he had found what he had come to find.

'Found it.'

Something was stuck to the ceiling.

It wasn't an artifact at all.

'The stone heart mushroom.'

Generally, they had foggy gray colors.

These mushrooms were Ian's target and goal.

"Ice spear."

Ian made long icicles which were much longer than usual, then with it, he scratched the ceiling. The gray mushrooms proceeded to fall to the floor.

'there is more than what I had thought would be here.'

This mushroom was poisonous and unknown as of yet.

A person who ate the mushroom's nervous system will be paralyzed, as if hexed by a paralyzing spell.

The only difference is, is that it will eventually stop their heart as well.

But with proper brewing, it will allow the consumer to be extremely calm in any situation and interrogation.

Thanks to this, the Greenriver Empire could completely overwhelm other countries in the spy war. Its existence was a great discovery, which showed a glimpse of the possibility of creating a Confederation of continents by the Greenriver empire.

‘For now, I need it the most.’

Soon, the ivory tower will start to make a move on Ian.
They will invite Ian, for a ‘simple’ interview.

‘The Tower lord may possibly even join in as well.’

He may have had a chance if he was on the same level as his former life. But for now, he wouldn’t be able to resist an interrogation spell cast by the tower lord and the other archmages. That’s why Ian desperately needed this stone heart mushroom.

‘Ledio will make it with no problem.’

Ian didn’t remember the details of the recipe for the potion.
However, he recalled that it was an easy alchemical product, such that it could be mass produced.

‘This would be enough...’

All of sudden while Ian was picking up fallen mushrooms,

“S... sir! What brings you here at this evening?”

Ian’s mana enhanced ear caught the sound.
A sound that was coming from the outside of the haven.
It must be the sleeping soldier’s voice.
Seems like someone had woken him up.

‘There are only a few who can cause the guard to be startled like that.’

Entry to this place was only allowed for the royal family. So the one who stood out there was most likely royalty.
It may be a Princess, the Crown Prince, or possibly even the Emperor himself.
Maybe, even one of the Five other princes.

‘Please do not be Ragnar.’

The bastard very much liked the haven.

Because he believed that he would be the Emperor one day, and as such he would be buried in here.

“Cancel.”

Ian canceled the light spell.

Then he hid in a dark and shadowed corner.

Yet, he would be revealed easily by the light of a lamp.

In most cases, he might be able to make some excuse under the guise of an innocent kid.

However, what if the visitor is the bastard?

‘Ragnar.’

Although he had calmed himself before, his emotions started to sway greatly.

His body kept collecting mana at the end of his finger.

It could easily kill Ragnar, who is still just a little kid.

Not even with the magic, just a simple grasp of a mana-enchanted hand.

It wasn't a good situation at all for Ian.

CHAPTER 30

THE ROYAL PALACE (3)

“What? But... A... alright.”

That was all that Ian could hear. The guard spoke loudly since he was embarrassed, however, the other person didn't speak loud enough.

‘Two people?’

There were two people who were stepping down through the stairs.
Maybe the guard was coming along?

‘The sound of the footsteps stopped.’

Both of them stopped at the bottom of the haven.
Their lantern didn't reach Ian.
He was still hidden from them.

“Princess. I know we don't have much choice, but this place...”

The first voice was a man's.
Not the voice of the guard, but that of a middle-aged man.

‘Princess?’

At this moment, there were three people in the royal family who might be called princess.
Fortunately, it wasn't Ragnar.
That was enough to relieve Ian.
He hid right next to the coffin of the first emperor.

“Rarely does anyone visit here, no visitors, nor sounds may sneak out.”

The voice wasn't mature like that of a lady, but Ian could feel a unique matureness in

the voice.

“I came here to do my princess duty, and Sir Kevin came here to check the magic spell on the haven. Good enough excuse, isn’t it?”

Considering the ages of the current princesses, This must be the emperor’s daughter, the sibling of the crown prince.

‘Hyri Greenriver’.

“People have said that there is no safe zone in the palace. However, this haven. I guarantee is. There is no such place safer than this place.”

“Maybe we’d better go outside of the palace...”

“The outside is even more dangerous. You should know, Sir Kevin.”

The flow of their conversation was weird.

It was weird enough for many others to suspect their relationship.

“My ancestors will understand. It is for our father and my brother.”

“Sigh...”

With her persuasion, Kevin sighed.

“Alright. I am afraid the wrath of heaven may punish me, but I don’t have a choice.”

Finally, Kevin accepted the princess’ request.

What are they going to do?

“I taught you the basic formulas before, have you memorized them?”

“Of course I have.”

While pointing at her head, she answered.

After watching her confident face, Kevin continued his words.

“Fine. Then, let’s start with light.”

Just then, a light sphere appeared.
It must be the 1st class spell, light.

‘A mage?’

There were few mages who stayed in the royal palace. Most were the ones who couldn’t overcome the limit of 1st class, ‘Untalented’ middle aged mages. They usually managed magical devices in the royal palace. Of course, there was no reason for them to sneak into the haven with the princess.

“Now, your turn, Lady.”

“Hmm, so, like this...”

What? Was the princess going to use magic as well?
Ian’s eyes opened widely with surprise.

“Light!”

A small light sphere that the princess made, it was at the level of a beginning academy student.

However still, Ian couldn’t help but be surprised.

A mage, in the royal family?

Ian had never known.

‘Had they hidden that fact?’

Except for the Academy and the Ivory Tower, teaching magic was a heavy crime.
In addition, hiding magical talent from the Ivory Tower was another heavy crime.
There must be a reason as to why they were doing it so secretly.

‘It seems the mage is teaching it fluently.’

1st class mages were also one of the mages of the Ivory Tower.

He must have known that what he was doing right now was a heavy crime.

Still, the mage, Kevin, didn’t hesitate.

He only hesitated about the place he was teaching.

“Huh? Why is mine so small?”

“There are several conditions which may cause it to be small. Insufficient quantity and quality of mana, detailed control on the formulae, proficiency of the spell. For you... all of them.”

“You’re so mean...”

“B... but since you started the mana breath a bit late, and your circumstances don’t allow you to practice...”

“Haha! Just joking.”

They weren’t that serious.

The magic lesson between the mage Kevin and the princess Hyri kept going.

A fundamental lecture of 1st class magic.

What is worse, they only had repeated for light magic.

Furthermore, the lecture hadn’t stopped for hours.

‘When will it end?’

Ian started to get bored.

At first, it was interesting to see.

A princess born with a mana heart and mana brain.

But why was she hiding the fact?

It caused Ian to be curious.

But soon after, it got boring.

‘She wasn’t even that talented.’

Too late to start learning, and lack of practice.

Regarding all of those conditions, still, she wasn’t the talented one.

She might stay at the 1st class forever. Soon, the question ‘Why did she hide it?’ became ‘Why the heck did she hide it?’

‘Now it will be hard to get out without any problem.’

It would work if he revealed himself at the very beginning.

He could give excuses such as, I was touring and arrived here eventually, and since the

guard was sleeping, I didn't know it was a forbidden place. However, the problem was the situation. They were learning magic secretly. They wouldn't dare to let him leave him easily now.

"Light!"

While Ian shook his body due to boredom, the princess' light was getting bigger. Now, it was shining enough to replace the lantern.

"Woaaahhh...!"

The princess was surprised like a child by the light globe she made. She was around 5 years older than Ian.

'She may have had different characteristics when she was young.'

In Ian's memory, Hyri was not a woman who had a bright characteristic. Like the crown prince, she had a great appearance. However, she always kept her mouth shut firmly, and with a darkened face.

A woman who spent her life like a bird in a cage and died.

'Well, of course, she hasn't experienced anything bad yet.'

The emperor was still standing firmly, and so was her brother. It was a completely different situation to her former life.

"Princess, how about we finish our class for today?"

Kevin finally said the word Ian was looking forward to hearing.

"If we stay here too long, people will suspect us."

The princess agreed by nodding her head.

"Thank you. I know it is a harsh request, but you have always helped me.

"No worries. Rather I feel sorry for you. I am only a 1st class mage. There must be a huge limitation to my teaching."

Kevin was also a 1st class mage.

He wasn't on the level where he could teach others.

Although he may have had more proficiency than the princess, he was still on the level of the 1st class.

"Maybe we should inform the ivory tower..."

"N... no way! It will get you caught up in the danger, as well..."

With the words "Ivory Tower", the princess reacted sensitively.

The reason for her sensitive response to the ivory tower was different to the crown princess.

The crown prince hated the ivory tower due to his sense of inferiority.

On the other side, the princess 'feared' the ivory tower.

"I will do my best. The mage who entered the palace with my brother, Ian Page wasn't he? People said he wields magic even though no one taught him. If I try my best, one day I may..."

As she knew it was near impossible, she was losing her confidence.

"Princess, you don't need to worry about me. I will always do my best to support you. Please don't lose your confidence."

It sounded like a consolation from a master to his apprentice.

Soon, they left the area at different times purposely.

Shortly after that, Ian left the area quietly.

To leave the area before the guard came back.

'It is a bit weird. Especially the reaction of the princess.'

Ian was living his second life.

It meant he was able to expect the flow of events.

However, the reason that the princess of the giant Empire was so afraid to reveal her talent to the Ivory Tower wasn't clear to Ian. Fear was always caused by some reason. Her reaction was completely different to her brother. There must be something.

'Something I don't know.'

In his former life, Ian became the newbie of the academy at this moment. While he was the student of the academy, he had learned of the events between the Royal and Ivory Towers by reading history books. However, at this time, he was in a different situation. He might have to confront those events directly.

‘It may be related to the tower lord. That old fart has long prepared to make Ragnar be the next emperor.’

It was the only case he could suggest.
It was the most likely scenario.

‘I should visit the royal library next time.’

Without any obstacles, Ian left the haven.
It took longer than he had planned.
He was satisfied with the mushrooms and the newly gained information.

“Sir Ian. Did you enjoy the tour?”

The guards who guided Ian before had asked.
While making an innocent child’s smile, he replied.

“Yes indeed! It was very enjoyable.”



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